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FAMILY SECRETS,

LITERARY AND DOMESTICK.

BY MR. PRATT.

IN

FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

Here's much to do with LOVE, and more with HATE.

SHAKESPEARE.

LONDON:

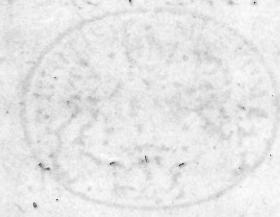
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1797.

FAMILY & MORRIS

THE

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TO
MRS. COCKBURN,
OF
MADRAS.

IT was the opinion of Mrs. Cock-
BURN, that much of the literary matter
which the author had some thoughts of
offering to the public, separately, in an in-
troductory volume, with a delineation of
some of the characters, and a design of the
work, might be wrought, with better effect,
into the work itself. He leaves the public
to judge how far he is authorised in adopting
that opinion. The accurate and able manner
in which this lady, at a very early period of
life, transfused into the English language, as
well the *profound* and *abstract*, as gay and
elegant, "THOUGHTS" of the celebrated

citizen of Geneva*,—where he “re-echoes, in the character of the *Genius* and *Representative* of human nature, and communicates to his readers that enthusiastic love of nature and virtue which glowed in his own breast,” at the same time that she has avoided intermixing the eccentricities and errors of what is excellent and useful in the writings of that exalted genius,—sufficiently evinces the sterling value of her observations. The author, therefore, has again ventured to incorporate *part* of what he had, indeed, twice before embodied and withdrawn, from a sincere doubt of his own powers to interweave it with *advantage* to the general interests of the book; for therein only can there be hazard. Of the POSSIBILITY of *raising* the general character of the English romance, by the interspersion of subjects of weight and sublimity, either in science or morals, so as likewise to raise the passions and affections of the fable, there cannot be a doubt: and it has, indeed, been by se-

* Thoughts of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, translated by Miss Henrietta Colebrooke.

veral authors occasionally attempted, and with success to a degree, but with apparent apprehension. The author of these pages is, therefore, perfectly satisfied that the IDEA with which Mrs. COCKBURN has honoured him, will receive the unequivocal suffrage of the professional critics, to whom his attempt to realise it is submitted : and could he have a moment's apprehension of that IDEA meeting disapprobation, he would certainly not have subjected her to any part of the censure he may incur from his own failure in the management of it.

But the obligation which the author owes to Mrs. COCKBURN on the score of literary arrangement is not the sole motive for addressing to her a proportion of this work, and *that* without any previous solicitation. The selecting of a patron is, he conceives, amongst the *inherent* RIGHTS of literature, which, however, he is aware her delicacy would, in the present instance, have disputed or denied : but there are privileges of an independent nature, the assertion of which should rest on our own judgment and discretion ;

discretion; and any *petition* to exercise these, implies a doubt even that they exist. The *freedom of election*, as to the choice of a virtuous person to exemplify a virtuous, even though it may be an unsuccessful endeavour, ought to be looked upon as amongst the most inalienable rights attached to the charter of literature. On that authority a writer should feel that he has

“ The world before him where to choose :”

and, on that authority, the author of these sheets takes leave to illustrate, by the conduct of Mrs. COCKBURN, his attempted portrait of a female, which may serve as an example of the filial, fraternal, and conjugal, virtues: and to sanction this illustration, he refers to that lady's family and friends, nay, to a yet stronger testimony,—her own CONSCIOUS HEART!

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FAMILY SECRETS.

CHAPTER I.

SHORTLY after John's departure, another day of unremitting embarrassment happened to Henry: the provoking cross purposes began in the morning, and continued until the evening, and were indeed resumed the next morning.

A gentleman now arrived at the castle, of a very singular character and conversation. His youth had been past partly at sea, and partly in foreign climes; and being in possession of a very competent fortune, as well from patrimony as from successful adventure, he had, for some years back, quitted the ocean, and all its enterprises, and set himself down on shore, in a very comfortable dwelling, within a neighbourly distance of Fitzorton Castle. Mr. Partington had many peculiarities;—there was a rough ho-

nesty in his manner, and a freedom of expression corresponding to it, which, at first sight, seemed more boisterous and rugged than the element on which he had been educated. His person was something under the middle size, and his features had little more of smoothness than his manners: but, beneath this uninviting exterior, beat a heart, every pulsation of which was genuine good-will to mankind, without the least alloy of *sentimentality*,—that shining dross which makes so much glitter in these tinsel times. Partington, if he liked you, was a friend *indeed!* but, the more he fancied you, the rougher would you find his address; and this rule held good in all the degrees of his approbation:—for, exactly proportioned to his *good opinion* was his jocular rudeness. If he thought tolerably *well* of you, he would call you a sad fellow; if, on farther acquaintance, you improved in his good graces, you would advance also in the scale of abuse, and he would speak of and *to* you as a cursed good-for-nothing devil: and when he had taken you into his heart,—wherein, by the
bye,

Bye, you might confide your honour, your happiness, and your life,—he would honour you by the appellation of a damned insufferable scoundrel! This being the highest and most distinguishing mark of his esteem, could be boasted of by few; for Partington never thought any man or woman deserving of *this* mark of his affection, unless they appeared to him pre-eminently great or good. We say, “man or woman,” because the sex of the person made no manner of difference to him.

His *dislike*, on the other hand, was expressed in quite a *contrary* way; but still he marked it by the same gradations. If neither your head nor your heart was satisfactory to him,—that is, if the first was not worth carrying upon your shoulders, nor the other in your bosom,—he would, if he spoke to you at all, accost you in very civil language. If you had any thing remarkably base in your disposition, he would be yet more polite, calling you sir, or madam; and if he thought you deserved a box on the ear, or the gallows, instead of a bow, he would

even, *pull off his hat!*—which being the last evidence of his *abhorrence*, bore the same proportion of contempt that his *damned insufferable scoundrel* did of affection. Nor were even his benevolences themselves less remarkably his own, than his modes of expression. He never *talked* of doing any person a kindness, and yet was kindness itself. In truth, while other people were *only* talking, he would be doing the very thing they talked about; for he would slip out of company, on fifty different pretences, none of which you could suspect,—and have had an interview with the party he had heard commiserated,—then return to the company with no alteration in his general manner, but that of loading with exaggerated scurrility the person to whom he was indebted for the opportunity of being bountiful: for, as this was the highest obligation his heart was capable of receiving, he had no other way of returning it. But more frequently he would appear altogether inattentive to tales of distress, or, if he *did* give ear to them, would break out into—“*Psha!*—don’t tell me! riff-

riff-raff! stuff! a pack of beggars! I should not have thought of their impudence! I say distress too!" and many such like exclamations: yet he would be at the door, or at the bed-side of the sufferers, and have every thing that was really of comfort in their habitations, before any other man of the party thought of leaving company. If, for instance, an apothecary was wanted, he would arouse him in the middle of the night, drag him out of bed, or some way or other get him under his arm: and if common necessities were to be supplied, he would run to his little *poor-rascal's warehouse*, as he used to call it,—and, making up his bundle according to the case, carry it in his hand, and have done his work before his orders to an uninterested domestic could have been well given.

CHAPTER II.

PARTINGTON had been long in the habits of intimacy with Sir Armine, and honoured the family with a liberal share of his

loving abuse, whenever he made it a visit; and each individual was as jealous of that abuse as desirous of his company. The trio of brothers filled his scale of epithets! James was only one of his middling sort of fellows; John had the pleasure to be ranked his cursed good-for-nothing caitiff; and Henry enjoyed the supreme distinction of being almost the *first* of his damned insufferable scoundrels. "Hark'ee, you Mr. middling sort of fellow," addressing himself to James after dinner, "how goes on the affair between this damned, insufferable scoundrel,"—here he shook Henry by the hand—"and you know who—you cursed good-for-nothing little devil?"—tapping Olivia on the cheek.—"What say *you*, you old rascal?" added he, turning to Sir Armine: "are you getting your gouty legs in order, to dance at the wedding? 'Sbud! man, you ought, upon that occasion, to give us an hornpipe upon your stumps, like Witherington; for two such pretty caitiffs as these do not come together every day, I can tell you! But, what are you all about, you lazy vagabonds,—shilly

shilly shally? If I were a parson, they should be married before I left the house:—young folks can't begin to be happy too soon.—Now look how that insufferable poltroon" (to Henry) "shakes and trembles:—why, one would think, instead of feeling the flames of love on sitting so close to a fine girl, whose tell-tale blushes ought to make him blaze out like a bonfire, that the ague had got hold of him. By the arm of my body, he quivers like a Lapland witch! Well, come, I will give him my blessing in a bumper. However, marry when they will, may the pledges of their love be just as good-for-nothing as their parents! the girls abominable huffeys, and the boys damned insufferable scoundrels! Put it round, old Vulcan!" said he, pushing the bottle to Sir Armine: he then stood up, and sung some stanzas, so replete with humour in themselves, and in so quaint and ludicrous a manner, that the whole company caught the hilarity of their worthy guest.

"Was there ever such a comical creature?" exclaimed Olivia smiling.—"But

hold, what is this I hear about Henry's going to be hanged for his fine devil's-works at the abbey?"

Henry's confusion was now re-doubled upon another account: for he did not at all doubt but that the subject which had been remotely alluded to by John, would be fully explained by this unqualifying son of the waves. Henry winked, nodded, and made other signs of keeping silence, which not only increased the curiosity of the company, but made Partington more determined. "I don't care for your wry faces a brass button, you scoundrel," said he: "I say, notwithstanding all your antics, you will come to the gallows:—'tis a serious matter to knock down a baronet on the very spot where he is to be buried, then throw his daughter into fits, and run away from both of them."

"Knock him down?" said Olivia. "Why, good heavens! if it had not been for Henry, Sir Guise would have been murdered. And as to Miss Stuart, for whom my soul still bleeds, her fits were occasioned (God knows)

knows) by the loss of her sweet mother: for, as her brother could not attend, Henry was her only comforter. This is the whole of the matter, I do assure you, Mr. Partington."

The earnest simplicity with which she uttered this, in the defence, and to the honour, of him she loved, and for whom she had always a vindication, had a visible effect upon all, but more particularly on Henry, who, torn betwixt the sensations of gratitude and shame, tenderly caressed her.

"You are both of you a couple of insufferable scoundrels, and encourage one another. For that matter, I'd lay my life, if this egregious villain"—to Henry—"should be hanged, this dimpling caitiff would tie herself up in her garters the next morning, that she might lovingly dangle by his side, upon the same gibbet. So, as I hope yet to see them tied up together, I think 'tis the best way to pinion them now, till their time comes."—Here he drew them close to his own bosom, formed their arms into the wreath of love, and ordering the whole

party to follow their example, conducted them into the garden.

CHAPTER III.

THUS were matters reinstated, to the general satisfaction; and even Henry felt it might have been much worse; for, though it had been so long the wish and endeavour of his heart to come to an explanation of its fatal secret,—any disclosure of it at such a time, in such a place, and under such circumstances, would have been the most overwhelming event that could have happened to him.

Partington, who had the romping playfulness of a boy, without the least of that mischief which usually attaches to the sport of youth, continued his pleasantries, amongst which was a proposition to run upon the green-sward along the park with Henry,—the winner to be intitled to a kiss from Olivia, and Olivia herself to be the umpire.

He pointed to a clump of elms, as the
I given

given distance : then putting himself into a starting posture, " There—I'll give you law, you villain—so away with you !" Henry was, perhaps, never less in disposition for a frolic ; but knowing that Partington,—who had now doubled his fists,—would have pushed him headlong forward, had he suffered himself to be overtaken, he soon sprung to the goal ; in doing which, however, he contrived to trip up Partington's heels, to the no small diversion of the company. " A bubble bet !" cried Partington, scrambling up : " the race was obtained only by a fraud, else I should have beat him hollow :—a contrived thing ! I saw both the villains laying their heads together, concerting how it should be, before I set off." The truth is, he loitered behind, while he counterfeited exertion, purposely that the supposed lovers might be thrown into each other's arms.

These fallies were interrupted by a knot of travellers, who were passing that part of the park, which sir Armine left free for the accommodation of the public.

The wanderers had the attractions of in-

disputable affliction, and of sickness its too frequent attendant, strongly impressed in their air, looks, and motions. — Yet there was no external appearance of want in any of the groupe ; all were habited neatly, and one of them bore a wallet laden with food : but the moment you beheld them, your own heart would have told you they were destitute of comforts, which were not to be found in that wallet. There are certain signs and tokens of misery, so visible in the human form and countenance, that every man, without an insult upon the human character and understanding, must see and feel them at a glance.

The groupe consisted of an elderly man, leading a boy about twelve years old,—a woman, something under the age of the man, with a child at her back,—and a beautiful young woman, who, sad and sorrowing, followed the rest. As the first and last mentioned objects stood by the side of the venerable Fitzorton, and the blooming Olivia, they exhibited, in striking contrast, the wonderful difference which sickness and health,

health, happiness and misery, produce in beings of the same species, and at the same period of life. "Please your honours," said the old man, respectfully, "I hope we are not upon trespass here; a man on the other side told us, there was a foot-way here to the place we are going: we have come clean from west to north, and are somewhat foot-fore; and every bit of ground saved, therefore, is something. Our Jane here, poor thing, can hardly drag one foot afore t'other: so, as night is coming on, and we are not acquainted with the country hereabouts, may-hap your honours, who, I suppose, are masters of thatun great house, would be so kind to give us barn-room, till the morning."—To this Partington made answer, "he was afraid the vagabonds had staid in their own parish till they were driven out of it bag and baggage; and were living now by accident in a barn, or a stable, or the open field, as they could manage it."—The old man answered, "Please your worship, none of us have been ever a burthen to the parish yet; and I hope, with
the

the blessing of God upon our labour, we sha'n't. But, we are burnt, stick and stone, out of our parish, where we lived upon our earnings, and a little matter besides, for these forty years. May be, your honour would like to hear a little about us. I am a mason, your honour,—so I bought a bit of ground, and built a house on him, and furnished him, a thing at a time; and there 'twould have done your heart good, to see how we lived, till a sort of quarrel betwixt me and a great rich person, who has an estate thereabout, and has a house like a town,—where nobody lives for a constancy, but a savage old servant or two,—for the master only comes a week or two in the spring season, or to gather rents, when the steward, who, by the same token, is worth a hundred of his master, can't come down.” —“ God bless his goodness!” said the woman, who appeared to be the mother of the family: “ if it had not been for *him*, I do believe it would have been bad off for us long afore; for the baronet was pecking and pecking at us, years a-gone: our Jerom,

who

who is gone forward with the mule, got himself made a freeholder, and would not vote for a friend of this great baronight—for he is one who is *'titled* to do as he likes with poor folk,—*bore* us all a grudge.”—“ And somehow or other, your worship,” resumed the old man, “ about August, in the summer after, I shut up house, whilst I and dame and youngster went a making a little harvesting at friend Armstrong’s, a cousin of my wife’s, who has a bit of a farm, and who wished me to bring all my family; and as we could make ourselves tolerably tight and smart at that time, we rigged ourselves out, and off we went; but when we got home from merry-making,—(what a world it is, your worship!)—I saw the top of my house where the bottom should be, and the walls as black as my hat.”—“ Why, Reuben,” exclaimed the wife! “ how can you be so milk-livered and mealy-mouthed, Reuben? Please your worship, as sure as you stand there, this great baronet, I told you about, set it a-fire.”—“ O impossible!” cried Olivia.—“ Set it a-fire, Miss, I say,” resumed

fumed the wife, emphatically flapping her hands together: "and I'll tell him so to his head, and bring all my ruined family in my hand, to *shew* him what he has done; for we left neither fire nor candle: and I'll take my affy-david that I put up the shutters, and locked the door, and clapt the key in our pockets, and the same to the little garden gate; and God knows, the keys are all now we have for it: here they are, your worship: aye, and they shall go *with* us to the wicked wretch, though all the keys in the world can't open his heart, because it is harder than they: but a' shall hear on't; and if there is law in the land, he shall ha' it."—"Hold your tongue, Sal!" said the old man: "I don't think, Sir Devil's-come, as we call him in our parts, would go to set a man's house on fire, when there wa'n't a soul in it, either to please or to tease him, or to say, why do ye so? though to be sure my house, as I said, is down, and all that was in it, burned or moved off; and what was worse, I had put into a drawer a little modukin of money, shillings and half crowns at a time,—
now

now and then a golden guinea ; and they are gone too ; though I have been pottering about with my stick, and my family have all been on their knees grubbing i' the ashes ; but it was all to no purpose. This fellow would have gone to pot too," continued the old man, pointing to a curl-tail black dog that followed him, " and so would the kitten under our Jenny's arm there, if we had not luckily put she to 'bide with Goody Brabson, a neighbour of ours ; so here is the whole family, your honour, counting Jerom and Dorothy."—Olivia, who had before put a trifle into the young woman's hand, now stroked the kitten ; and Henry, long before the story had arrived at this stage, had made his offering ; James, patted the dog, called him a lucky fellow, and assured him, considering such dangers, he had a very narrow escape. At the suggestion of the house being maliciously set on fire, every particle of blood that supplied the body of Partington, flew in his face ; he cried out, " O that the worthy baronet had been in the middle of the flames ! I would have set fire to my
own

own house, to have had him in the centre! but I don't believe a word on't! it's a lye! it must be a lye! I *will have* it a lye! Are you sure, fellow, you did not see it on fire *yourself*? And why do you keep that child, woman, swinging at your back all this time, when there is such a fine soft bank by the side of you, and the grass full of flowers, and as dry as my walking-stick?" Here Partington loosed the bandages, took the infant in his arms, repeating, "Answer me that! answer me that! down with ye, down with every one,—you two old sinners, in particular,"—Partington appearing to bend them to the ground forcibly, but, in truth, lowering them with all possible gentleness. "As for you," continued he, "good people," addressing himself to his own party, "the evening begins to draw in: the dew falls: see how your fine neckcloths and handkerchiefs shrink at it:—sun-flowers can bear nothing but fair weather:—the dew won't suit your gouty limbs, you old scoundrel,"—to Sir Armine—"nor your delicate ankles, Mrs. Abominable,"—to Olivia—"the

vaga-

vagabonds may remain: they are used to clouds: and so in with the family, you blubbering, water-headed rascal!"—to Henry—He spake this as in rebuke, though, by the bye, his own face was covered with tears.—“Pack off, I say: I will have it so: I'll be with you presently:—but you are to know that I smoke a damned lye, all through this business; and I am determined to have it out with the ragamuffins; and I don't doubt but I shall have the satisfaction of seeing every one of them sent to the house of correction; and that I shall bring them to old Armine here, to make out their mittimus.” All this time they had been moving, or rather Partington had been pushing them forwards: and as the Clares and Fitzortons knew the poor creatures would be left in good hands, they bent their steps back towards the castle.

CHAPTER IV.

"Good heaven!" exclaimed Olivia to her father, as the party were walking home, "do you think there ever was such a shocking thing done in the world, as for a person to set fire to his neighbour's house on purpose? I have read of such horrid actions in newspapers, and once, I think, in a book, but never believed either to be possible; indeed, I felt a kind of disgust at the author of such incredible fictions."

"It is almost a sin, my sweet girl," said Mr. Clare, "to destroy your opinion of human kind, formed on the basis of your own innocence. Painful as it is to oppose the wisdom of experience to the blissful simplicity of a pure and unpractised heart,—I have known more instances than one of it."

"Yet we seldom—I never did," resumed Olivia, "hear of people coming to an untimely end for these horrid crimes."—"That too is amongst the vices of the times," rejoined Sir Armine. "People make their fortunes

tunes now-a-days by being *ruined and undone*. In a few months after these *lucky misfortunes*, we behold new trades carried on by those who had been turned pennyless out of their shops: and we see new houses rising, like so many phœnixes, out of the ashes of the old."

"My dear girl," cried her father, "who can detail the history of modern inventions in the art of living?—There is, comparatively, a poor livelihood, child, now to be picked up out of the real miseries of life; but luxury and independence pour in their stores on the designing;—thus, some impositions are a decent maintenance, and others a very comfortable sinecure: in short, to make *fictitious distress* the instrument of *real good fortune*, is amongst the most dextrous refinements of this improving age; vice is always at work, and works with the greatest success on the sensibility of virtue."

"Dreadful!" exclaimed Olivia. "But I cannot think the poor creatures we have just left, are of this description; for, surely, that old miserable man, who asked for nothing

but the charity of a bed of straw in our barn, could not trump up such a falsehood against the person he spoke of;—and, indeed, I have blamed myself, every step I have come, that I did not beg my dearest Sir Armine to let him have some comfortable place to rest his family to-night :—the young woman really looked ready to sink into the earth with fatigue; and yet she kept the poor kitten in her arms; and I heard her ask her mother to let her carry the child, twenty times.—Indeed, indeed, Mr. Partington judges too harshly of them! Gracious heaven! Henry, if the world is half so wicked as you and your brother John have painted it to me, I do not see how such a simpleton as your Olivia is to live in it.”

Here the lovely girl ran to Henry, and, placing herself betwixt him, her own father, and Sir Armine, she said, in a tone that might have taught hypocrisy to forego its victim, “ Well! thank God! while I am thus protected, not all the bad people in the world can do me any harm!” saying which, she entwined her arms, and clung
towards

towards her parent and lover, as if she felt herself in a sanctuary.

"But," said James, with his usual good sense and moderation, "the miseries of human life, induced by *inevitable* misfortunes, are, alas! so manifold, and so various, that the soul is not to be frozen up, because vice can assume the appearance of virtue in distress, and, by applying to the same source, may partake of the same bountiful stream."

"Respecting the wretched family we have been talking with," said Henry, "we have all seen they are both sick and sorrowful, my dearest father: and I dare pledge myself, every tittle of their story is true."

—"Truth may, perhaps, lie between," interposed James.—"I would go barefoot a thousand leagues," exclaimed Henry, "to punish the author of their ruin; but if, having found him, he was evidently under the pressure of any heart-wringing misery, pining with want, or wasting in disease, I hope I should do what I could to comfort him."

—"It is certainly right," said James, half-conceding, "to take care that vice does not run
away

away with the perquisite of virtue: but it is, nevertheless, better that they should divide our bounty, than that, from fear of encouraging the one, we should refuse to reward the other."

"The virtue of designing well," said Sir Armine, with a deciding voice, as he reached the portico of the castle, "if it fails of some, is seldom deprived of all its rewards.—Let the honourable passions and emotions of our frame declare the unrivalled privileges of a gentle and unsuspicious heart:—let the power which it gives us, in the energies of our loves and friendships, pronounce its eulogy:—let pity, charity, candour, benevolence, easiness to believe the best, and tardiness to credit the worst,—yea, and the sweet, very sweet, simplicity that sometimes conducts us to the precipice down which we are hurled by the villain guide,—let even the pure and innocent heart itself, through all its meanders of sensibility,—let it, in vibrations of transport, declare, it is the prime delight of man, and the choicest gift of God."

Olivia

Olivia here pressed the hand of her father, then that of Sir Armine, upon her heart; "You have now all settled it so entirely to my satisfaction, and have brought me again into such good humour with that world, which some of you had almost put me out of conceit with, that I will not stay to hear another word."—The whole company went into the house.

CHAPTER V.

"IT is among the wonders of the world, when I wonder," quoth Partington, to the family in the park: "and yet I must confess, the audaciousness of your telling that impudent lye about some worthy gentleman's burning down your house, because you would not vote against your conscience, does throw, even me, into astonishment."—

"Sir," answered the old man, with some dignity, "I do not pretend to say it is so for certain: but Goody Brabson is ready to swear it; for she was disturbed the night before, and saw ill-looking fellows lurking about;

and before that day come-week, my house was down;—but as for a lye, I don't know whether I would tell one to have it built *up* again.”—“No!” answered Partington:—“then give me your hand, you scoundrel!”—“But, for that matter,” resumed the old man, “there are hotter doings at electioneering, than burning down poor men's houses.—Why, blest your worship, I have seen the candidates, as they call themselves, ready to set fire to one another.”—“Aye, your honour,” interposed the old man's wife, “that's not half the mischief! there was something worse than 'lection riots in this affair:—naughty Jenny there, and this poor brat at my back, if it could speak, could tell you all about that.”—Here the young woman whom she called Jenny, made signs for her mother to keep silence; upon which the mother exclaimed, “Huffy, I will speak! his honour here shall know who are scoundrels, and who are not! Mayhap his honour is a justice of the peace, and will give us some law.—An' please your worship, that baronet is the father of this babe; after my
Reuben

Reuben had refused his vote, this baronet grew so kind, that we thought, God help us, he repented his *kashness* to us; whereupon I was a kind of a char-woman now and then at the great house, when he came down for a week or two: and if I was wanted at home, why, I sent Jenny there, backwards and forwards, as well spoken and likesome a girl, your honour, aye, and as shame-faced then, and for that matter now, tho' she has had a bastard, as any she of the country;—and so, behold ye, this villain of a baronet was only kind for the sake of she; and, behold ye, he contrived to get to the sight and speech of her, and soon put the girl aside herself; she could talk of nothing but the baronet:—the baronet told her this—the baronet gave her that!—I believe in my conscience he turned her silly head, and overset her in such a way, that she was crazy enough to think of becoming my lady:—aye, and he put a new golden ring on her finger, and called her wife—though he was married before, and, they do say, to a *moral* of a woman—not that he ever brought maddam down—and he persuaded

filly Jane she was dead—thof a maddam he had there too; and there she comes at times ftill, for a month in the fummer, and fays she's the baronet's cozen—marry come up! a dainty cozen! I warrant, she cozens his virtuous wife finely. But to return to our Jenney:—Reuben and I began to think it odd the girl should get fo much into favour, feeing how we were hated before: but we ftill were fools enough to believe that Sir Guife ————”

“Sir Guife!” exclaimed Partington: “is *he* the baronet? It's all true,—get up—tell the reft of your ftory as you go along. I fee you are a pack of fad fcountrels; and I fhall infift upon Fitzorton's houfe covering all of you fomewhere until morning. And do you hear, girl?—Jane, I think is your name—do you lean on my arm; and do you, mother Blab, take hold of the other arm—you, young varlet, keep clofe by your father—huffy, keep you by your mother—but as to the fuckling, you muft carry that fin yourfelf, Jane; for the devil feducer me if I touch any thing belonging to that pretty gentleman, unless

unless I should have the felicity of tucking him up under the gallows. Well, but that happy day may come yet!"

Partington had the family all up on the march before he had got to the ejaculation with which he finished his harangue,—and disposed the several persons in the order described. In this manner they were moving along towards the castle, when they encountered Henry, who, partly in consequence of Olivia's whisper, and partly to gratify his own curiosity,—or, perhaps, from a better principle,—was returning to the spot where he left the groupe. Without relating stories, or entering into causes, Partington ordered Henry to run as fast as his legs would carry him back to the castle, order a comfortable supper, but not among the servants, and half a dozen well aired beds, and tell old square-toes it was his command:—"Nay that 'tis the old caitiff's duty," said he; "for here is justice business enough for a whole sessions; and moreover, if he don't chuse to accommodate them, come back again and tell me so, that I may

take them to the Fitzorton-arms public house; for they shall not go out of my custody till I sift the affair to the bottom; and as it's moon-light, a mile or two more less, for good suppers and good beds, can make little difference."—Henry, who was ever ready to assist the unfortunate, without paining them by a recital of distressful stories, hastened, without asking a single question, to execute his commission.

Partington returned to the travellers, who began to think him insane, and put himself nearly in his former situation, with the difference only of taking the child gently from the young woman, who had been giving it suck, and saying, at the same time, "Come, as that little rascal may one day be brought in evidence against its virtuous father, I think I will give it a lift: and so go on with your walk and your story, old caittiff."

"As I was saying then, your worship, we foolishly thought Sir Guise Stuart——"
"Proceed," cried Partington, "if you can, without any more mentioning that worthy
gen-

gentleman's name, for it puts me in a fever: call him—call him—baronet."

"The baronet, then," answered Mrs. Atwood, "was never easy but when some of us was at the great house; he wanted Reuben to give up masonry:—we staid in the parish a twelve-month after the fire, with Goody Brabson:—the baronet wished us to take one of his farms,—sometimes he said he would pull down the great house, and build up a finer, which would do for his son, when he married, and give Reuben the job: and as for Jenny, I don't know what he was to do for she,—he would take her to his other great seat in these parts;—I never was there, your honour; but I *will* be there, and sooner than he thinks.—Well, he would pull this other down, and let her live with miss—miss Caroline:—so we e'en let her go; and coil enough there was about it, from Reuben, who had been told by neighbours, what would become of it; however, I thought it for the best; and away she went."

"Accursed be the hour she did!" said Reuben.

“Don’t interrupt her, you vagabond,” cried Partington, doubling his fists,—not at Reuben, however, nor at any person present.

“The upshot of it was, an’ please your worship, that one Valentine Miles, a man that used to do all Sir Guise’s—I beg your honour’s pardon, I mean—the—the—baronet’s dirty work, such as pounding our strays, suing for rents, and the like,—Miles, I say, your honour, took Jane, as he said, to Guise Abbey; but in fact, far enough a-field from that: he carried her up to London; always calling her my lady—and, as the foolish girl was in love, she believed it:—and for that matter, she lived like a lady, sure enough—lady’s maids, lady’s livery-men, and what not!—no wonder, your worship, poor Jane believed it all gospel, for I thought it so myself—for *a’ter* this, he had her married over again: but that was sham too, just like the ring business *afore*; for the fellow who married her, was as little of a parson, and as great a rogue, as himself:—so your worship sees the end on’t—this poor boy!—”

“Whew!”

“Whew!” whistled Partington. —“And we might have lived in ignorance, and she in wickedness, poor thing, a great while longer,” continued the afflicted father, caressing his betrayed daughter, “had not somebody sent us a *nonnus* letter, as they call it, saying our daughter was a double U, Sir Guise Stuart an R—and the child a B——.”

Partington here gave the old mason another shake by the hand, and then bade the wife proceed.

She then related a variety of other heinous particulars, unfolding the villany of Sir Guise and his agents, and ending with the recovery of the deluded Jenny to the arms of her family. “Yes, your honour,” said Mrs. Atwood, in conclusion—“and so this very day was six weeks brought Jenny and her brat home to us again, dressed in the very gown she went away in,—a good stuff of *our own honest buying*, and which she has got on, you see, at this present.—But, with the blessing upon us, we’ll make the baronet ashamed of it yet; for we are going

to settle, not passing more than thirteen or fourteen miles on t'other side of his abbey; and we have come a matter of that about, purposely to tell him a piece of our mind: and if your worship can do any thing in this affair, give us some justice; for we'll have none of his money: so far contrary, indeed, that one of the mule's paniers, with Jerom, is loaded with all the things,—some of 'em pretty smart ones too,—that he gave us before Jenny went from us.—As to the fine clothes, and trinkum-trankums he gave she, they were all left behind at the wicked place where we found her.”

Their walk and their recital ended together; for they had now arrived at the castle, where they were again met by Henry, who told Partington, all things would be done as he had directed.—“Then lead the way,” said Partington; “for these are much greater vagabonds than you think, and must be taken care of accordingly.”

Henry conducted them to a large apartment adjoining the steward's.—Partington ushered them in, ordered the servant to place

place chairs,—assisted in the business himself, observing, that, “though they were vagabonds, they were every one to be treated with the utmost respect.”—He desired them to eat, drink, and be merry,—to be in good humour with one another; but, above all things, not to say a single cross word to that good-for-nothing hussy, Jane; and to take care that the child had some pap.

CHAPTER VI.

HENRY and Partington returned to the company, where Olivia was still presiding at the tea-table, declaring Mr. Partington should not go without his usual beverage. This was a pint basin filled with tea, and milk, and honey, in equal proportions. “If you would not have me choaked with rage, give me the *slop*!”—so he always called it:—and seeing the basin before him, he spilled one part of it, and swallowed the other; then taking breath, he threw himself into a chair, the blood starting into his face, while he recited the history of the Atwoods,

making no other variations than distinguishing Sir Guise by the words "fine fellow! pretty gentleman! the hero of the tale!" But, though these epithets were not bitter in language, they were intolerably so in the manner of their delivery: for, at the mention of his atrocities, he would sometimes leap up, take the room at a couple of strides, exclaiming to a chair, to a table, to one of the company, or even to his own shadow in the glass, supposing it were Sir Guise, "Your most obedient very humble servant, my noble baronet! I trust your execution is not very far off; for other facts are coming out, I dare say; and all the crimes of human nature will conduct your honour to Tyburn, I flatter myself! Would to heaven they could all be bundled with you into the same cart, that you might be put out of the world together! I would empty my cellar,—aye, and almost my strong box too,—to celebrate that glorious event."

The effect which the narration had upon the company, was various. Lady Fitzorton lifted up her hands, and wept silently.—Mr.

Clare

Clare exclaimed, "Execrable wretch!"—Sir Armine knit his brows, and said, "Poor Charles! what does he not deserve, to atone for the curse of such a parent?"—Olivia said, "The poor girl and child deserved every care, that innocence betrayed, and helpless infancy, could receive from pity."—"These old caitiffs too have their merits," cried Partington. "But what can be a sufficient tribute of admiration for Miss Stuart?" exclaimed Olivia—"so good! so considerate!—how, my dear Henry, shall we do honour to her?"—Henry held his tongue, and spake nothing, yet looked as if he subscribed fully to the eulogy.

Partington, however, was the most busy of the groupe. His hands, head, and heart, seemed to be full; and he divided the evening between his insufferable scoundrels above stairs, and his abominable vagabonds below.

Olivia, too, frequently stole out, and whispering Henry, who always disappeared soon after, hastened to Partington's guests; and, under pretence of asking if they had every thing

thing comfortable about them, took occasion to shew many little marks of a generous nature and of genuine good-will.

She had particularly directed her own maid to provide all things proper for the child, and would have sent to the manor-house for her own cradle, but was prevented by Henry, who reminded her there were several in the castle.—“Gracious! perhaps your own—what an honour, if we could procure that!” exclaimed Olivia: “the poor babe is innocent, you know: alas! and its mother can scarcely be called guilty; my Henry.”—She took care that a comfortable change of every thing was provided from her own wardrobe, and placed ready for Jane Atwood, in her bed-chamber; nor was she unmindful of the rest, in such little additions as might be proper to the general happiness.

Prior again to this, true George had been dispatched by Partington to the eastern gate of the park, at which Atwood’s eldest son Jerom, with Dorothy, was appointed to wait his family’s joining him.—“The boy will

will stand stock at the gate, please your worship," said old Atwood, as he overheard Partington giving directions : " he *said* he would, thof it were for a couple of nights. I never see'd such a boy for that: bid 'un do a thing: and if he answers 'Aye,' the thing's done; but then again, if he gives you one of his *noes*, i'cod, your worship, he's more of a mule than Dorothy!"

" I see into the vagabond's character at once," replied Partington. " Go then, George: you will find him stuck to the gate; and if he won't leave it, take Armine's team, and bring gate and all."

True George, when he had a good-natured thing to do, never addicted himself to unnecessary delays, and was, besides, one of the most active young fellows in the world. He set off, therefore, for the eastern gate, as if his own bed and board depended on his dispatch.

To confess the truth, this honest fellow had been more in the secrets of Atwood's family than any other of the servants. Indeed, he was a youth of most insatiable curiosity,

riosity, where the gratification thereof had but the probable aspect of being attended by a good office; in searching after which, he was indefatigable. And judging from his beloved master Henry's second visit to the park, by moon-light too, that some new adventure was near, he had contrived to take his usual station of an out-post, for fear of being discovered. By a little *bush*-fighting, however, which is extremely honourable, he formed his ambuscade behind some flowering thorns, which grew in that part of the park where Mr. Partington recapitulated, in an audible voice, so much of the Atwoods' story as had then been told.

CHAPTER VII.

WERE it our intention to give to each of the heroes and heroines of this epic history a day of prowess, after the manner of the great Mæonides, who dedicated one book of his Iliad to Ajax, another to Agamemnon, and so on,—we should certainly consecrate this chapter to the achievements
of

of Olivia, who, from the orient sun, even to his down-going, and again to his uprising, was employed in doing at least as much good as any illustrious ancient or modern, whom fable or truth has yet celebrated, were we to begin with Philip of Macedon, and end with Frederick of Prussia; and we do not at all deem it unreasonable to declare that we expect, the very abridgment of her acts, during the abovementioned space, will make the reader more in love with her, though rehearsed in humble prose, than if, in imitation of those royal butchers, she had laid a thousand of her fellow creatures, with her own hand, dead at her feet, in the field of battle.

The day, then, of the fair Olivia Clare, was ushered in by an act, mild and lovely as the first ray of the morn which shone on it,—even by an early walk round the garden with the unfortunate Jane Atwood. Luckless victim! thy modest appearance and blushing graces, and all the deep regrets of downcast consciousness streaming from thy eyes; thy keen sense of the *novelty* of a virtuous

tuous woman soothing and not aggravating the fate of a woman betrayed,—justified thy mother's description, and made the compassion and loving kindness of thy protectress a virtue worthy to be imitated by thy sex! a sex, too often cruel and unrelenting to most pitiable victims.—After several turns about the walks, Olivia conducted her still trembling protégée to the breakfast-room, where the Atwoods had been invited by Sir Armine to join the family: but seeming to feel themselves farther from home there than in the apartment where they had passed the preceding evening, they were again committed to the care of Partington and true George.

Olivia, understanding this, begged permission to seat Jane between Henry and herself, saying in a whisper to her father, "Because, you know, we can comfort and make her chearful." Besides the shyness which only an intercourse with the world can remove, a painful consciousness of her error, and of the knowledge which the company had of it, made the timid Jane discover so much uneasiness,

easiness, that the good-natured Olivia perceiving it, led her first to the window, and then out at the door, saying, "her young friend was not very well, and, though sensible of the honour intended her, wished to take breakfast with her own family." Partington's proposal to blend the Atwoods and Fitzortons at breakfast, was amongst the generous little inconsistencies or rather indiscriminations which were interwoven into his character, inasmuch that you would sometimes see at his table persons whom, from their difference of character and condition, any man who attended to the ceremonies of the world, and indeed to the distinctions of ranks in society, would have thought it impossible he could bring together. But the same objection by no means held against the propriety of Olivia bringing this young woman into so much good company:—the best and most justifiable motives influenced the fair protectress; and there was a natural grace and gentility about the no less fair protected, which Sir Guise, in giving her the best masters, had not a little improved. In truth,

Jane

Jane attributed her misfortune, and all its fatal consequences, to the violence of the baronet's passion for her; and she looked on the mock nuptials as so solemn a pledge of his love, that she herself encouraged the wish of Sir Guise, that the union should remain secret, from an idea which sprung from the purity of her affection, that having the joy to tell her own heart he was her wedded lord, she had rather continue to be thought herself dishonoured, than that he should be degraded. Her father's finding and carrying her off, she long considered as the sole cause by which she had been separated from the baronet:—and although none of these motives wholly obliterated the inward sense of her first indiscretion prior to her supposed honourable union, or suppressed the sigh so often as she turned her thoughts towards her deserted father and his family,—she cheered herself by reflecting that if ever she should qualify herself so as to justify Sir Guise in owning her as his lawful lady, all would still be well. Inspired by the expectation of such a reward,—she applied with
unwearied

unwearied diligence to whatever might render her more attracting in manners, and cultured in mind.—Her grand object, in attempting the adornment of both, was, to deserve the honour which she believed Sir Guise had conferred on her; and to enable him to acknowledge her with less comparative disgrace:—and as the baronet sometimes found relief in her gentleness, from the violence of Mrs. Tempest, and the disturbance of his thoughts on his usage to the real Lady Stuart,—his kind treatment of her made her still lay much of his deception to his fear of losing her by a discovery of the truth; and although her parents, more especially her mother, never uttered his name without annexing to it a curse,—she acknowledged to Olivia in the garden, that, although she too well knew she had herself acted very wrong, she did not believe he was half so bad as people represented him. “This I must say: though, except we happen to meet with him at home this morning, I must never hope, and indeed, I do not—de—desire—that is—I do not—*ought* to desire, ever
to

to see him more.”—“This morning, child?” questioned Olivia: “what do you mean?”—“Yes, madam, my father and mother, and my brother Jerom, are determined to see him; and—and Jerom swore on his knees—— But what good can it do, madam, to drag me before his family? And then my brother is so passionate!—If, indeed, Sir Guise could be sent for to any other place but his own house—and—and—talked—to—about me, or about the poor child——or if—if—I—if—I—I——”

Here grief awhile choaked her utterance. —“Not that my father,” added she, “would suffer either of us to receive another farthing of his money: he would sooner work his poor fingers to the bone; nay, all which Jerom has in one of those great panniers, are presents sent by Sir Guise or myself, from town, since I imagined, alas! myself, and assured them, I was his sacred though secret wife; and my father and brother have worked night and day for these four months past,—indeed, ever since they knew of my disappointment,—and almost starved them-

*

selves,

selves, to save up the money they have received, that they may throw it back to the baronet;—though, if any thing should happen to my brother, or to my father, or—or—or—to—any—body—else,—I know not what would become of me. Would I were dead, miss! I am a wicked girl, and have no right to live, bringing the grey hairs of my poor father and mother to the grave. You do not know how they are altered—they are not like the same people, since they heard of my misfortune—though they have not given me one harsh word since I came home; yet I cannot curse poor Sir Guise, as they do,—indeed I cannot: pray forgive me, miss; I tried to make him love me,—indeed I did:—I shall never see him again, so I do not speak on that account; but were he as much to blame as myself, I had rather die than be the death of—of—of—any—body in the world, much less the father of—my—my—pray forgive me—yet I would to heaven, some kind-hearted person, though I know I do not deserve it, would try to persuade my father from going to the abbey.

Would

Would to heaven, Miss Caroline Stuart did but know, or that I could any way get a letter to her! I have one ready-written—I am sure *she* would contrive—O miss, you do not know what an angel she is;—not that I ever saw her but once—but that once, I shall never forget it—she almost broke my heart:—one Mr. Dennison, the baronet's steward, whom we sometimes saw at Clare Place, brought her unawares to my lodgings, when he knew his master was gone a journey; then it was that she told me, if I would return home to my poor father, and make my family a visit, and then find some excuse to stay with them, without letting any body else know of it, except Mr. Dennison, she would take all the care of the child to herself, nurse and provide for it as her own, and that she would promise I should not only hear about its welfare, but contrive, now and then, to let me see it, by means of Mr. Dennison; and none of my family being let into the secret; and that as to Sir Guise, said the sweet young lady—(except yourself, miss, I never saw her equal,
I either

either in goodness, or in beauty)—it will be easy for us to manage matters with him : for you know, Jane, continued she, he must at times be as grieved as yourself, for the injury you are both of you doing to the most affectionate wife in the whole world.— Then it was, I first discovered his former marriage, and on authority, alas ! I could not disbelieve. She saw the agonies into which the information threw me, and tried to soothe them ;—ah ! why are not all good people, all virtuous ladies, so mild as her when they speak to—to unhappy women ? Sure the gentle accent would have more proselytes than the stern rebuke.— What an atonement it will be—exclaimed the angel daughter of the unfortunate Sir Guise— what an atonement, Jane, for the wrongs you have done my poor mother, who is, both in spirits and health, a sufferer, if you,—who were so often the unknown cause, though, I own, an unconscious one, of her husband's estrangement and absence from home,— should also be the secret cause of his return to her ! I am sure I, as his child, shall be

bound to pray for you during my whole life ! and shall look upon the attentions I shew this poor little thing—(my child, you must know, was then, continued the weeping Jane, asleep in the cradle just by me)—I say, I shall look upon the attention paid to your babe, Jenny, as part of the gratitude I owe the mother, for the amiable consideration shewn for my own parent ; and, indeed, your merit, my good girl—she called me so, miss, though I did not deserve it—will be much greater than mine, on this occasion: for you, perhaps, will sacrifice a strong, though an improper passion, to a much superior principle, and I shall be but an humble instrument to reward you for so doing ! But your reward, Jenny, will be much greater, and administered to you by an infinitely higher power, whose forgiveness of the past will be accompanied by eternal happiness in future !—Here, miss, the sweet lady took my child in her arms, and kissed it several times, and putting it again into the cradle, said—Yes, and this dear little thing too shall honour its mother ; the first words I
will

will teach it to lisp shall be *blest my mother* for all her goodness! If you consent to this, Jenny,—Dennison and I will devise some means for you to have the child properly disposed of, when you go into the country; and it will be as true as easy for you to say, you know a person who will take care of the infant till you come back. — Then, taking my hand, and again kissing my poor little one, she went down with Mr. Dennison, who wept as he assured Miss Caroline that my infant—was like the—the—I—I—I—forget what, miss—but something about its likeness to Sir Guise:—I often thought there was a resemblance;—and, I am sure I could not but kiss the hand of good Mr. Dennison, for what he said about it—pray forgive me, madam.

“But all Miss Stuart’s intended kindness was put a stop to by a wicked woman, Mrs. Tempest,—and a tempest she is by name and by nature,—who ferreted me out, and called me all manner of names; I deserved them indeed; she pulled the hair from my head, by handfuls, before his face;

she made him promise I should go away from him, before she would quit the house ; and, after repeating all the shocking names she had before made use of, and cursing me several times (for she swore terribly), she threw herself out at the door, declaring, she would be the death of us both, if her own soul was the forfeit, unless he brought her word I had left the lodgings, never to return : so that you see Sir Guise was forced into what he did : yet I thought on what his good daughter had said to me, though it was no time to make him more wretched by my reproaches, or speak of the fatal truths which had been told to me. But I was going to send my father word, if he would receive me I would return home, and never see the baronet more,—when my father himself, and my cousin Jonathan, entered the room, while Sir Guise was there : they found me with my hair dishevelled, and every part of my dress in disorder ; which led them to suppose that Sir Guise, who looked no less terrified than myself, had been beating of me : for it was just after Mrs. Tempest had

had gone away. But I never breathed the name either of good Mr. Dennison or his young lady, to Sir Guise, or to Mrs. Tempest; so that they cannot come to any harm on my account,—there's some comfort in that."

Here the tender and afflicted Jane talked to the infant, kissed, and wept over it, while Olivia experienced strong emotions of grief, love, and admiration, as well for the friend of her infancy, Miss Stuart, as for the mother and the child.

CHAPTER VIII

UPON the return of Olivia to the breakfasting parlour, which was immediately after she had placed Jenny more at her ease with her own family, she seated herself, even though her beloved Henry was in the room, between Mr. Clare and Sir Armine; and in that situation recapitulated, with great fidelity,—but with many comments and illustrations, supplied from that rich repository, her own good mind,—all that had passed be-

tween her and the humble companion of her walk. Both the old gentlemen were much affected, and experienced, in their turn, the sensations, though perhaps in a less vivid degree, which had before been felt by Olivia; nor were those of Lady Fitzorton, who had a very tender disposition, less animated. But what shall be said of the emotions of Henry? especially at the passages that depicted the virtue of Caroline Stuart, on whom Olivia passed an eulogy that would not have been unworthy of Henry himself!—regretting, at every sentence, that the friendship formed between them in childhood had ever been destroyed.

We must, in truth, leave this matter, as we have done many others, to the reader's own imagination.—If he has been, or is, a lover, he will not be at a loss to conjecture;—if he has not, he may be still able, faintly, to judge what a young man of an ardent temper, and under Henry's circumstances, would be likely to feel on such an occasion.

Be it noted also, to the honour of Olivia,
that

that in her recital she sunk upon her little auditory, probably in consideration of Henry's friendship for Charles Stuart, as many of the indefensible parts of the baronet's conduct as she could; or, rather, she gave to truth its most candid form. At this moment Partington entered the room, took a chair, and sat thoughtfully down. "To let the Atwoods meet the Stuarts, you know,"—said Olivia, addressing herself to Lady Fitzorton, and looking at the old gentlemen,—“would be little short of actual madness,—at least till matters are in better train; and to allow them to take possession of the cottage they mentioned, just at present, while left to the guidance of their own resentments, would be as bad. Suppose then”—here she had a long whisper with her father, at the end of which, she sprung up, and running to Henry, asked him if he was disposed for a walk to the poor deserted manor-house, that fine morning?—“My father,” said she, “has given me a commission, which must be executed immediately.”

Henry was rising to attend her, when

Partington getting up, cried out, "Hold hold, you little villain! I see you, and your old scoundrel of a father, are upon some scheme to trick me out of my vagabonds:—but it won't do:—I have settled the whole business. They are getting ready to go with me; and I have ordered your little message-cart, Armine, to come in tow of *my* chaise; and I had a good mind to have ordered your chaise into the bargain."

"And you might have done so," said Sir Armine, warmly,—“and my coach too.”—“And *my* curricule,” cried Olivia, putting on her cloak.—“And *all* our carriages,” added Mr. Clare;—“but then, you must not cheat my poor Olivia out of her share of the Atwoods.—She tells me, the eldest daughter is to succeed the foolish young woman who is marrying off.”—“O!” exclaimed Olivia, “I cannot do without dear Jane;—she is the only woman in the world to replace Lucy:—and her child will be no hindrance; and the manor-house is really catching cold, for want of company.—You know, my dear Lady Fitzorton, you never let us live any
where

where but with you, at the castle ;—and we are ten times greater vagabonds, as Mr. Partington calls them, than any of the Atwoods.—So do not interfere with my part of the property, pray, Mr. Insufferable !”

“ Be it so:—you are a sad fellow, though,” answered Partington :—“ but as that is the case, my chaise and the cart will do.—I have sent the caitiff, true George, after Jerom and his Dorothy, as he calls her ;—and I will go before, upon one of your horses,—not your mad-cap, Bucephalus, though, Henry ; you have taught him some of your poetical flights.—Od’s pranks ! the high-mettled rascal would throw Apollo ;—one would think he was making Pindarics, while mere mortal man was upon his back ! —No, no, James’s even-going pad for me.” —“ Order white Surry for the field to-morrow,” quoth Henry, sportingly.—“ But whither,” demanded Lady Fitzorton,—“ are you going to carry the good folks ?”

“ To where all vagabonds ought to be carried—to a place of safety:—so don’t ask any

more questions:—look to the huffy and her brat, who are to go into your custody.”

“But shall we not,”—resumed Lady Fitz-orton—“see them again before they go? I have not seen any but the eldest daughter and her infant yet.”

“No,” answered Partington:—“no leave-takings. The people are sick and sorry;—and as to gratitude, and all that, time enough to settle these matters when our work is done. We are officers of *justice*, you know, and of course are responsible for our prisoners.

“Meantime, it is easy to *suppose* the men and boys have made their bows, and the women and girls dropt their curtsies. I hate blushing and blubbering:—so good bye to you—I hear the carriages wheeling round;—aye, and there I see steps on Steady,—your youngest villain, Armine, is leading him.—I shall have the vagabonds come whimpering, if I do not stop them.—Not a step, therefore, on your lives, you scoundrels, till we have got through the park.”

“But

“But promise me,”—said Olivia, following Partington to the door;—“you will leave *my* property; I ought to go and settle that matter myself.”

“Settle nonsense!” cried Partington.—“I’ll tell the girl, she and her child are to be put into prison, by you instead of me.”

“Oh! but another thing,” said Olivia:—“I would not have you go to the abbey, nor within sight of it, for the world:—you know not what may be the consequence.—Gracious!—Mr. Partington, you are the best man in the world—*almost*—but—but—are so precipitate—so——”

“Did you ever hear such a saucy, vexatious, talkative, prittle-prattle, insolent, insufferable scoundrel, since you were born?” cried Partington, taking her hand and kissing it.—“Why, you little impertinent villain, do you pretend to instruct an old rascal like me, where I am to go, and what I am to do?—Do I ask, how you intend to dispose of your share of the ragamuffins?—whether strangling, shooting, or only whipping, is to be their portion?—As

to the abbey, do you suppose I will carry such a set of abominables before the worthy gentleman"—here he took off his hat, and bowed respectfully—"who has been so kind to them, till they are in a proper condition to bring him to the gibbet?—But you have kept me talking here, while I could have got, with my whole crew, almost half-way to my journey's end :—so ask no questions—stay, all of you, in this room, without ringing the bell, twenty minutes, by Olivia's watch :—and so God mend you all."

Saying this, he opened the door, and meeting Henry, he thrust him into the room also, crying out, "God mend you *too*, you scoundrel!"—then locking the door, gave the key to one of the servants. "Here, firrah, if you let them out before the expiration of twenty minutes by the click of that pendulum opposite, to which I now station you"—pointing to the castle clock—"I'll anatomize you:—nay more, I will have an hole dug, chin deep, in the very spot where I now place you,—and turning you into a fun-dial, with a brass plate nailed to
your

your head, make you learn to keep time for the rest of your life!—Stay, here comes George,—you are released, firrah,—this rascal will serve my purpose better.—Here Mr. Scoundrel,” said Partington:—“twenty minutes, to a moment, keep this key,—then open that door,—and have an eye to the windows too; but as I know you to be a thorough-paced villain, and therefore to be depended on,—you may move about a little, just to stretch your legs.”

Partington mounted Steady, after a short conference with Jerom and his mule, who now came up,—packed the Atwoods into the carriages—and George took his station.

CHAPTER IX.

THE Clares and Fitzortons had too sincere a veneration for the virtues of this excellent man, not to let him conduct them in his own way.

Sir Armine and Lady Fitzorton could not,
how-

however, but smile at the conceit of their own castle being converted into a jail, and one of their own servants into the jailor ;— and they were puzzling themselves, to know in whose custody they were placed, when a voice, which they knew to be that of true George, addressed them through the key-hole.

“ Pray, my ladies and gentlemen, don’t be angry ;—I hope you will be pleased to be shut up for as long a time as Mr. Partington has ordered ;—not that I mind being *‘natomised*, a pin’s point ;—but, says he, you are a scoundrel of honour, George,—this was in a whisper—shaking my hand at the same time—your worship knows his way.—So I am sorry I can’t let you out, my ladies and gentlemen : but I know, if I did, he would never call me a scoundrel again,—though, mayhap, I should be more of a scoundrel then than I am now.—The time will soon be gone ; fourteen minutes and almost a half now.—They say, time has wings : but I think, I never knew him creep so slow in my life.—I wish I could tell you any pretty story, or sing a good song,

song, or do any thing, to keep your honours in spirits, while you are my prisoners. As for that, had your honours been confined in a dark room, you would have been better off than poor me, or Mr. Partington either:—for there was such kissing and crying with the old folks, on leaving Jenny and her child behind,—and Jenny, I believe is hardly out of her fits yet!”—“In fits!” answered Olivia:—“let me out this instant—no—run and tell her—I will be with her in—a—very few minutes.”—“I can’t go to tell her, miss, though I had rather be in fits myself, than she:—yet I mayn’t budge till my time is out.”

Among the other good qualities of George, he had one well worthy the adoption of all his party-coloured brethren,—to wit, that simple but rare property of doing what he was ordered.

“But here she comes with the child in her arms, and the tears all about her pretty face:—now I can tell her, miss,—nay, for that matter, in about another minute and three quarters you may tell her yourself.”—

Here

Here he entered into a short conversation with Jane,—looking alternately at her and at his watch,—then he exclaimed—“Huzza!—Huzza!—the time’s out! the time’s out!”—and he vaulted in the air as if he himself had gained his freedom after years of slavery.—He unlocked the door, entered the room, and entreated their honours’ pardon, on receiving which, he went comforted away.—Olivia hastened to her charge—Henry was about to take his share in the business, when his father requested him to stop a few moments, as he had something to communicate, to which the presence of his mother, and their mutual friend Mr. Clare, could be no objection,—being, indeed, parties concerned. “No,” added he recollecting himself,—“it will do rather better to-morrow morning.—I forgot a few points which I have to adjust previously with *you*, my dear Clare.—To-morrow morning then, Henry, we will have our conference; the result of which, I trust, will be as perfect happiness to you, as can be expected in a world like this.”

Henry

Henry stood irresolute, whether to speak or not ;—and, while he was balancing, Olivia came back, light as the gossamer, and said to him in undeniable accents,—“ Now, then, for our walk to the manor-house,—and Jenny Atwood will be of our party : the air will do her good ;—and besides, she will be wanted,—or if she should be fatigued, my good papa has commanded me to take the coach going and coming, if necessary :—and why should not dear Jane, and you and I, Henry, have an airing this morning, as well as the rest of the Atwoods and Mr. Partington?—We will be back by dinner-time, sir,”—added she to her father—and then distributing, to the rest of the family, her little caresses, with a grace perfectly her own, as she always did before she went out,—she took her Henry’s arm: and as Jenny Atwood modestly declined the carriage, they all three walked through the park of Fitz-orton, and to the manor-house of Clare.

CHAPTER X.

THIS little excursion was productive of an event, which had well nigh brought about that very explanation which Henry had so long desired, yet dreaded, should take place.

Olivia had, at this first setting out, arranged Jane Atwood between Henry and herself,—each insisting upon taking an arm; but soon after, Olivia made a little alteration by putting herself in Jenny's place, declaring "That she was resolved to have the charge all to herself." Whether this was the whole, or only in part, the reason for the change, it is impossible for us to say, but it was that which she thought fit to assign; and there was no time to dispute it; for just as the trio had gained an eminence in Mr. Clare's park, Jenny was led by curiosity, or some other motive, to ask, "Whether the fine seat to the right did not belong to—to—to—"

Per-

Perceiving her falter, Olivia relieved her by saying "Yes, that is the abbey: but we shall have a better view of it presently;—yet the manor-house will be quite jealous if you give the preference, Jane, to the abbey."

Henry suppressed a sigh as he directed his view to the latter.

"And I suppose, then, that forest," resumed Jane, with increased emotion, "is—is—is—the one I have heard—so—so much about?"

"You are right," answered Olivia: "those are the abbey woods;—but I would have you to know, our dear little groves and shrubberies will supply you with more fragrant flowers and enchanting walks;—do not you think so, Henry?"

Jane appearing faint, Olivia proposed resting a few minutes in one of the small alcoves. Hither they repaired:—Jenny and Henry sat on the same bench,—perhaps by accident, or out of respect to Olivia; for they left to her one which commanded an extensive prospect, whereas theirs had nothing to recommend it but an indistinct view
of

of the abbey, and a skirt of its forest.—Olivia did not profit by this mark of their politeness, rather preferring a seat on the same bench;—and, no doubt, by a like chance, or compliment, thinking she had sufficiently asserted her claims, placed herself by the side of Henry;—almost in the next instant her attention was drawn to some pencillings on the opposite pannel of the wainscot;—she rose to read them.—Henry, impelled by a sudden recollection, caught her gown, and gently drawing her towards him, she again sat down, without in the least suspecting there was any other motive in the mind of Henry than that which, to her own, was the most delightful—the sweet thought of Henry;—and she would have left the alcove, without, perhaps, thinking of her former intention, had not Jane Atwood, as she was going out, exclaimed, “Good Heaven! here are the names of that angel, Miss Caroline, and Lady Stuart! and—and—” had Olivia permitted her to stay another moment in the alcove, she would have discovered the rest: but that amiable girl, believing

believing she could not get her away too soon, hurried out, protesting, "They should not have time to settle their business, and be back by dinner."—She took, however, the first opportunity, when they had got into a path which did not admit their all walking together, to assure Henry she was doubly indebted to him for his considerate goodness in preventing her from running on to, perhaps, fatal discoveries:—"Generous Henry! you feared Jenny, who finds, alas, but too many occasions to speak of Sir Guise, would have been led, by seeing the names of his fair daughter, and deceased wife, into a train of thought, that it is not for her peace she should indulge.—But I wonder we have never observed these names before;—indeed, it has not been the manor-house summer this year;—the castle has made us truants from this our other home. I do not think," continued Olivia, availing herself of being behind Henry, in this narrow pathway, and Jenny's walking before, the grass on the opposite side being left for mowing, and

and almost ready for the scythe,—“I do not think any of the family has been in that alcove since July was twelvemonth, when, you remember, we all dined and passed the day there. I do not remember any penciling then; and it is odd enough, how the names of the Stuarts should be there, as none of them, except Charles, would be likely even to come upon our grounds, since our unfortunate quarrel, you know.—Is it not strange Henry? But hush,” said she,—“Do not answer me now: dear Jane will think we neglect her:—stop, let me pass you, and join her:—but do not loiter behind.”

Saying this, she bounded beside him at a place where the grass happened to be scanty;—and, like Camilla, seemed scarcely to bend the blade.—Thus did Henry escape a discovery of an imprudence, which the excess of disappointed love alone could excuse;—for, had Olivia put her first design into execution, or Jane continued to go on, the following verses would have been found pencilled,

cilled, in a smaller character, immediately under the names of Caroline, Lady Stuart, Sir Guise, and Henry.

O potent Love ! that thy true sighs,
Could reconcile antipathies !
Ah, then, thy rosy bands should join
Henry and faithful Caroline.
Then too, their long contending fires,
Warm'd by thy soul-cementing fires,
To thy pure shrine should incense bear,
And parents aid their children's prayer.
Ah ! try then, Love, thy potent sighs,
To reconcile antipathies !

This effusion escaped Henry in one of his tender migrations ;—for there was scarce a spot on any one of the estates, which had not received some memorial of his disappointed passion—and in not a few places his Muse had been called upon to celebrate the fair object of his afflicted heart—except in those exigencies, when he was really too much distracted by his passion for Caroline, to indulge his passion for poetry, or even to know that the fictions of poetry had a place
in

in his heart;—so entirely was it at those times rapt by the realities of love. Happening to be one day sitting in the alcove which we have just left, when he was far from happy, yet as far from being hopeless,—the precise state of mind, perhaps, which admits a poetic description of real feelings, his thoughts took that turn, in prose, which he afterwards versified in the manner we have seen. The warm-breathed prayer, for the moment, soothed the woe: but how he suffered such a tell-tale evidence, in which “his hand appeared against his heart,” to remain, we know not:—certain, however, it is, that a future hazard, from the same cause, was put at defiance; for the verses were rubbed out so effectually the same evening, that not a trace was left for the searching eye either of curiosity or jealousy.

CHAPTER XI.

As Henry and his fair companions were ascending the flight of steps which led to the front of the manor-house, Olivia

observed, "That two persons on horseback were near the paddock," which was at the distance only of a few paces from the back of the mansion.—Olivia, with Jenny, ran to the edge of the steps to see; and Henry followed, as the persons on horseback were passing the great gate,—the iron-work adjoining to which, ran the full length of the house and court-yard:—Jenny cried out, "Oh heaven! there is my guardian angel herself!—there is Miss Stuart!—I should know her from a thousand!—that is she, madam!—the beautiful lady on horseback!—and the person with her; is good Mr. Dennison:—I must, indeed I must go and pay them my humble respects."

She was down the steps, and round to the iron railing, in a moment, exclaiming, at every step, "Heaven bless your ladyship!—God preserve you, Miss Caroline, and you too, Mr. Dennison!"—They were returning from their morning ride round the parks, by the public road, which encircled the three estates.—Olivia, hearing the name of Caroline, impelled by the recollected

fondness of infant days, and by veneration, to see a lady, for whose virtues she bore such respect, ran with no less speed ;—and Henry, agitated by a thousand emotions, rather flew than ran, to behold the cause of all his bliss and all his anguish. Caroline having stopped her horse on the first hearing of Jenny's ejaculations, recognised the person who had uttered them, but had scarcely time to exclaim, " Whom do I behold ?—Is it possible ?—Can it be Jenny Atwood ?"—before the sight of Henry and Olivia put all her ideas to flight. " Dear associate of our blooming hours !" said Olivia,— " has chance at last permitted me again to offer, personally, to your virtues, that tribute, which Henry Fitzorton has a thousand times heard me pay you,—and which my secret heart had mingled with my constant prayers for the choicest blessings of heaven upon the good ?"

Caroline was about to reply, but was so visibly affected by the emotions of admiration and astonishment, excited by the unexpected sight of, perhaps, the three persons upon earth

earth most calculated to raise those emotions,—and, possibly, by some other not undelightful reflections,—that she could not utter a word, and with great difficulty kept her seat on the horse: and when Dennison reminded her, “That Sir Guise must be within a very short distance, as he heard the gate shut, which belonged to the cottage, where they had left him conversing with the labourer;—and as the sudden sight of Jane might occasion some disturbance,” the good old man recommended a separation of the parties for the present.—“Gracious heaven!” exclaimed both the ladies, as if inspired by the same wish, and vexed at the same disappointment,—“How cruel!”—“I have ten thousand things to say,” cried Caroline.—“And I a million!” observed Olivia.

“Sir Guise Stuart coming! did you say?” questioned the trembling Jane Atwood.

“O how long my heart has ached for this meeting! But you shall hear all from our dear Henry,” said Olivia to Caroline.—“And I hope some favourable mo-

ment will arrive, when—but at present this deserving object of your attention might make it, perhaps——”

“I hear the sound of the horses’ feet,” cried Caroline:—“Barbarous fortune!”—“Ride on, for goodness’ sake, miss,” exclaimed the alternately flushed and pallid Dennison, guiding her horse from the railing again into the road.—“Jenny Atwood, get out of sight, I charge you:—my master is just behind.” Then beckoning Henry towards him, the old man whispered—“Joyful news, dear young squire! joyful news! you’ll hear it soon;—but master must not see Jenny:—we shall be in a peck of trouble again if he does:—joyful news! joyful news!”

The rapidity with which all the parties conversed and separated, and the characteristic actions and looks of each person, were such as to exceed our powers of description. Dennison and Caroline were soon out of sight; for when they had past the iron rails, the interposing trees and thickening hedge-rows, shut them from the view.

Henry

Henry and Olivia, though scarcely able to support their own emotions, were engaged in carrying, rather than leading, poor Jane Atwood into the house ;—where they were no sooner arrived, than the hapless victim of love and conscience almost fell on her knees ; burning, at the same instant, with her blushes, as she implored permission to be taken where she might just have a glance, one glance, at Sir Guise, without being herself seen ;—promising, that it should be the last request she would ever dare to make concerning him :—“ and, oh ! pray, pray consider, whatever be his faults he is the father of——.” Then seeing Olivia give a half assenting, half denying look, betwixt compassion and reluctance, as she raised her up,—the hapless girl followed to a chamber in the second story, without seeming to want any of the strength or life which had before left her ;—and, running to the window that looked into the road, she clasped her hands together, crying, “ There—there—there is—there is—the father, alas ! of my poor—poor—dishonoured ——” and,

without finishing the sentence, fell senseless upon the floor, lost to the view of what she had so earnestly supplicated.

It was not easy to recover her : for when she had any return of life and reason, her quick sensibility of shame for the confusion she had caused, and the weakness she had betrayed, produced such terrifying relapses, that, had not True George been dispatched to the manor-house, to say dinner waited, and gone back with his usual speed, seeing the posture of affairs, and asking no questions, but taking it for granted the coach, with which he soon returned, would be necessary,—it is not probable they would have regained the castle that day.

When Olivia and Henry had leisure to separate the reflections which the foregoing scenes had crowded upon them, a new light was thrown over many old subjects.—First, it appeared very clear to them both, as it afterwards did to the whole family, that such was the dominion Sir Guise Stuart had still over the affections of Jane Atwood, it would be highly improper, and indeed impossible,

possible, to place her at the manor-house, or any where else in the neighbourhood of the abbey. Secondly, Olivia was struck with the increased personal beauty and graceful manners of Caroline, set off as they were by an ineffable kind of smile, which seemed to open upon the person addressed the warmest and most brilliant rays of her heart and understanding ;—indeed, she saw Caroline also, under the influence of unusually happy feelings, proceeding from the joyful news that Dennison hinted at ; she therefore, gently reproached Henry for not having done her justice :—she doubted whether, even his candid mind had not suffered the insults received from the father, in some small degree, to create a prejudice against the daughter ;—but this idea was done away on her reconsidering the matter, “ for,” said she, with the most unsuspicious simplicity, “ if this were the case, it would have operated equally, and perhaps more so, to the disadvantage of the son.”—She then tried to account for the matter in many other ways ; and it ended in her reasoning, as

usual, to her Henry's credit: she told her own heart—and the intelligence communicated to her cheeks a suffusion of that beautiful bloom, which is produced by conscious pleasure,—she told her own heart, that the tender partiality which Henry entertained for herself, made him blind to much greater perfections in every other woman.—This settled the point to that heart's content; and he was again honourably acquitted, as to prejudice, but found guilty, sweetly guilty of injustice:—yet love pardoned him even that offence; “For in truth,” said she, “injustice to Caroline is love to Olivia.”—It is at any rate, very certain, that, amongst all her ways of investigating this want of rhapsody in Henry, on a subject whereon she thought its whole scope would have been warranted,—she never once hit upon the only cause to which it might have been attributed, and to which a thousand other young ladies would, most likely, have assigned it.—Reader, whatever be thy sex, in the degree that thou art armed with knowledge of the world,—or art arrayed only in that

that natural innocence, which has no suspicions or concealments, and which may long be the amiable victim of its credulity, without at all supposing it is so,—thou wilt pronounce upon this part of Olivia's conduct and character. If thou hast the world's wisdom about thee, thou wilt condemn her as a silly girl, wanting penetration, where the most stupid are said to be sharp sighted;—but, if thou art endowed with that unsuspecting quality we have mentioned, proceeding from unpractised innocence, thou wilt love her for possessing that, which, wert thou united to congenial virtue, would make thy home a paradise, and thy partner such as the old poet has described, where he observes, thou mightest

“Lay thy sleeping life within her arms”

But, whether thou believest such excellence for natural or not, we can only re-assure thee, such was the excellence of Olivia Clare;—and if thou art a man, the worst we wish thee is, that thou mayest be con-

vinced of its possibility, by marking such another woman for thine own.

CHAPTER XII.

IN the progress of the evening after these occurrences, Jenny, by the tender assiduities of Olivia, became much more composed, though at the first sight of her own little one, she burst into a flood of tears, amidst which she told the infant, she had encountered her name-sake — she tried to impart to it a share of her own emotions,—and concluded by asking the poor babe,—as if it were of an age to feel and reason on its misfortune, “Whether it would be possible for Sir Guise to look upon that innocent face, without kissing, loving, and affording it some protection?”

But the greatest difficulty for the historian of these pages, is to enter into, or explain the result of Henry’s sentiments and feelings on the various incidents of this eventful day, every hour of which, as indeed of several preceding ones, had gradually wrought him

him to a tension of thought and sensation, almost too oppressive and tumultuous for his reason to sustain.—Every time he beheld Olivia, he witnessed not only her particular attachment to himself, but the general excellence of her character.—He saw all that is most graceful, and most worthy, uniting in her disposition:—he perceived that she was so guarded by the ingenuousness of her own heart,—it would have required none of the refined arts of a hypocrite to deceive her, in whatever most concerned her peace, even for her whole life together:—he observed, that her faith was so entire in him, that, as he never did, and indeed never had opportunity to intimate her affection was not returned,—it is doubtful whether any thing but the strongest confirmation of positive proofs could have persuaded her to believe it. For his deepest mysteries, she had an explanation supplied by her love, and satisfactory to her reason;—and, for his very languors,—(we will not use so chilling a word as coldness,—it was, perhaps, not possible to his nature)—for his languors, her

own delicacy suggested an apology, or rather a vindication. Her warm encomiums on his Caroline evinced the superiority of her soul to that petty jealousy, which too often takes alarm at the charms of another woman;—and her behaviour to the poor Atwoods, more especially to the dishonoured Jane, notwithstanding her trespass in a point which few females can pardon in each other under any circumstances, no, not even where their conscience tells them, for the most *selfish* reasons, they ought to have a degree of fellow feeling,—was a fresh instance, amongst innumerable others, of her liberal and forgiving spirit;—placing her conspicuously on the list of the truly good, though not on the catalogue of those whom Mr. Addison has emphatically called the “outrageously virtuous.”

These considerations, re-inforced by those which, as auxiliaries, he placed before his eyes,—the family arguments in her favour, such as a similarity of religion,—the ardent hopes of both their parents,—the reward which so much constancy, such unwearied

tender-

tenderness and goodness claimed from him;—with the sad reverse in case of his remaining insensible, or undecided,—such as a religious dispute, the most of all human contentions to be dreaded, whether in families or in states,—the misery, perhaps the death, of Olivia's father, and of his own parents,—the despair, perhaps the distraction, of Olivia herself, should she discover not only that she had not been the object beloved, but that he had all along loved another;—these reflections, we say, with the impressions left on his mind by the keen observations and cautionary hints of his brother John, had, at intervals, since he returned from the funeral of Lady Stuart, almost reconciled him to the idea of surrendering up his love, as a sacrifice to his friendship, gratitude, and filial duty:—and how powerfully these three advocates can plead their cause in a heart like that of Henry Fitzorton, those who are acquainted with their eloquence, alone can tell.

At times, he even pleased himself with the proud triumph he supposed he should
I feel

feel on such a sacrifice, and thought, for a moment, the felicity of many ought to outweigh, in a generous mind, all considerations for the happiness of one.—To encourage him in these sentiments, he now paid more than his wonted attention to the words and actions of Olivia,—expatiated on her various attractions, personal and mental,—talked to others, and to himself about her, and absolutely set himself seriously down to the task of trying to ripen his affectionate friendship for her into love,—at least such a degree of it, as would guard her from his own wandering feelings, should they join their hands:—the natural effect of all which was, that although he did not make Olivia more in love with him, because that was impossible, he riveted the affection she sincerely felt for him, in a manner that death alone, and that her *own* death, could break the chain; for she had been heard to declare, (and truth guarded, while it graced her lips) that Henry's descending first to the grave could not impair her attachment, “since I am convinced,” said she, weeping at there
being

being a human possibility that he might die first,—“the memory of him would be infinitely more dear to me than the life of any other man, be his professions or pretensions what they might.” But, alas! the very attentions which we have observed Henry had imposed himself, were imposed as a *task*, and—like other forced formalities, and coercive lessons, which *must be learned*,—turned the whole into a reluctant, but necessary toil;—

Hic labor hoc opus est,

was its motto, which, in the end, made him recede from the point he thereby proposed to gain, in the very proportion that Olivia, whose tenderness was prepared to receive every the least impression, and expression of his,—and whose own tenderness was her heart’s spontaneous joy,—advanced towards it.

And, indeed, those efforts in favour of Olivia were always made by Henry after several days’ absence from Caroline: but the bare mention of the name of the latter, the sight of her miniature, which the reader certainly

tainly recollects he was in possession of, and to which, "though it be not here written down," we trust the said reader has represented the too faithful lover, as frequently paying his secret devotion,—or even the most trivial circumstance that had allusion to Caroline, would, in a single moment, level with the dust the laboured fortification he had built in his fancy, for the reception and defence of Olivia.—And, when he supposed his partiality to that last-mentioned amiable girl was greater than it used to be, after he had heard her launch forth into eulogies on the person, manners, voice, or recorded deeds of Caroline, it was then most demonstrable, that his esteem was the greater for the one, because she had then done most justice to the other:—in fact, because Olivia, his *friend*, had offered homage to Caroline, his *love*:—and thus did the former become the victim of her own unsuspicious generosity.

CHAPTER XIII.

AFTER this explanation, it will not be matter of surprise to the reader, that, though Henry neither spoke, nor was spoken to, in the momentary interview he had with Caroline at the manor-house,—the sight of her, and perhaps another look, of which *he* only knew the sense and sentiment,—for lovers alone can translate, with accuracy, the silent language of love,—the most recent cordial poured into his heart by honest Denison, in those brief but potent sounds of “Joyful news at home, young squire!”—these were more than enough to make him forget the little he had learnt from contemplating the virtues of his fair inmate;—and convinced him, that his heart was neither a convert to Olivia, nor an apostate to Caroline.

While yet in this disposition, the hour appointed for his interview with his father approached,

proached, and he determined it should also be the hour of his long smothered confidence:—but, what was his surprise, what his disappointment, when, betwixt the time of True George's coming into his apartment, to announce his father's being prepared to receive him in his chamber, and his ascending the stairs, to obey that summons, his mother hastened, in much disorder, to say, the interview must be postponed! as a sudden return of his poor father's complaint made it impossible to speak on any subject in which his feelings were interested; but that, if he found himself not sufficiently recovered in a day or two, he would depute *her* to communicate his sentiments, “which, I am sorry to say, my dear Henry,” added she, “are of a nature not to brook delay;—and I am not without my fears, that something he has just heard respecting you, Henry, has been the chief means of bringing on a fit of the illness, to which you know he is unfortunately subject.”

The trembling Henry, after expressing the most sincere sorrow for his father's sudden

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den attack, earnestly entreated to know how he had been the unhappy cause?

“I have received your father’s strong injunctions,” replied Lady Fitzorton, “not to breathe the subject either to you or to any of the family till farther notice, and must now return to his chamber: for, alas! Sir Armine is all this time in extreme pain.” Turning round, however, as she was going out at the door, and looking steadfastly,—“Henry,” said she, “if the intelligence which has reached us be true, your own conscience will point it out: and if happily it be false, the same bosom instructor will acquit you, and leave on your mind no other regret, than that your father *must* suffer from the misconception, till it can be done away.—In either case,” added his mother, “the report, we trust in God, has reached only to your father and myself:—heaven forbid that it should have extended farther!”

Henry’s bosom instructor told all, and more than all, perhaps, of the tale to which his mother alluded;—it did not hesitate a moment to suggest to him, that the fatal
secret

secret of his heart was beginning to circulate. He still suspected it had come to the ears of John; and he did not at all doubt but it was now rapidly making its progress through the castle.—The first wish of his soul, we have seen, was that this *might* be the case: but all the feelings of gratitude, of delicacy, of duty, and, as it will speedily appear, of interest,—made him desire the discovery should be attended by those *preparatory explanations*, which, if they could not exculpate, might qualify his conduct.

Indeed he began now to suspect that the secret was already more spread than he had before supposed, though it was plain, from Olivia's whole demeanour, that it had not yet been communicated to her.

And this, reader, seems to be the place at which we must speak to thee again, though not perhaps for the last time, in the character of recorder of these annals.—We are not to learn, that a printed book is a very perilous, and in some sort an assuming undertaking, and that the wit and wisdom of a reader are upon guard and in arms, like
jealous

jealous centinels, to espy the weakness, vanity, negligence, and ignorance of the man who comes forward as an entertainer, or instructor of the public.

Some of these errors are of course obvious: and it is extremely probable that thy acumen has enabled thee to detect many, many more, not generally apparent: and in good time thy fault-finding powers may assist thee in discovering others: but, as we would not perversely, maliciously, or wittingly, leave any of the stumbling blocks in thy way, we will at all times do our best to remove them, as well for thy ease as our own: for it is as sorry a thing in books as in life,—and we hold it alike villanous,—to put people, whether writing or talking to them, out of temper, when it is in any possible way to be prevented.

Now it may happen, that, before thou hast gained this stage of our history, we have put thee a little out of humour by a seeming violation of probability: it may have offended thy critical talents, that we should have, as it may seem to thee, maliciously

ciouſly contrived to lock *this* Family Secret in our Henry's breaſt, although ſuch a number of keys, not only in his own houſe, but in the neighbourhood, were ready to open it. Perhaps, thou haſt long ſince exclaimed, "Go to!—Can it be ſuppoſed an impetuous youth ſhould pay his court to a lady in the neighbourhood, to the daughter of his father's bittereſt enemy, for ſo long a period, undiscovered; that many of the ſervants of her family and of his, that a brother of each houſe, and now perhaps of both, notwithstanding all the private and public tumults,—can it be ſuppoſed that this matter ſhould be any ſecret to half the ſurrounding pariſhes? and was there not to be found one officious enemy, or "good-natured friend," or idle goſſip, who, on the ſwift wing of folly or curioſity, or the yet more rapid one of malice, would have even panted to carry the tidings to the only two perſons moſt intereſted in its truth or falſehood, namely, Olivia and her father? or was the neighbourhood of Fitzorton-caſtle, the only ſpot in the whole world where

no such friend, enemy, or gossip in petticoats or in breeches, resided?"

In reply to such interrogations, it behoved us to search somewhat deeply, not only into Henry's secret, but into the secrets of human nature: and having so done, we firmly believe, that our knowledge in these hidden mysteries—reverentially and not vauntingly be it spoken—will clear up to our reader's entire satisfaction, whatever talents he may have for discontent, all that remains to be discovered on this at present questionable subject;—and that in a way, that may justify us in keeping Olivia and her father out of Henry Fitzorton's secret, should it be necessary, a great while longer.

At present it may be sufficient to remind the reader, that if he looks into the history of life, he will find that the persons most interested in any family secret are generally the last of that family to whom it is imparted.

CHAPTER XIV.

No wonder, therefore, that Olivia and her father were, in the castle, the last and the only persons who heard the secret that so nearly related to themselves:—for although love-tales, being amongst the most light, are the most easy of carriage—yet it may very possibly happen, that even the strong temptation which naturally arises out of a strict inhibition to do the very thing forbidden, may, in some minds, be contrasted by a yet stronger desire to resist.—And this was the exact case at present:—that stronger desire was the sincere love which was entertained for Olivia by every part of the family: even the gossiping part of it in the servants' hall would sacrifice the delight of doing what was commanded not to be done, to the superior pleasure of saying and doing every thing that could keep *her* from the knowledge of whatever might give her pain. And, as to Sir Armine and his lady, there
were

were other obvious reasons why the intelligence that might reach them would be withheld from Mr. Clare and his daughter.

Now, in regard to Caroline Stuart, though the same motives would operate the same way towards concealing from her the secret of Olivia and Henry,—for Olivia could not be more the object of domestic good will amongst the servants,—it was, in her case, less necessary to act upon those motives: for Sir Guise scarcely ever had a guest at home since his disgrace, but Henry and father Arthur; and there was not the smallest intercourse between the kitchens of the two houses, from whence most of the materials for secret history are collected;—and she really had no opportunity of knowing, nor did she hear any thing that related to the Fitzortons, since the separating quarrel, save what Henry and her brother Charles chose to communicate:—and whether those unhappy friends were likely to tell Caroline, as matters now stood, the reader may by this time well judge.

Henry Fitzorton's ill-fated passion, there-

fore, yet remained to be told to those at the castle, who were the most deeply interested in its effects.—Yet in the proportion that he imagined it known to others, he panted for its being communicated even where he most trembled to confide it: and in the perplexity which his long suppression produced, he began to wish that it were unravelled by any means, rather than it should not be unravelled,—and the more especially since the mystery of his love was not the only one that oppressed his heart.—Sometimes he determined to write, sometimes to speak the whole story to Olivia, and throw himself on her generosity. Sometimes he had thoughts of making her father first acquainted with the history, “whereof by parcels he has *somewhat* heard perhaps,” says he, “but nought distinctly.”—This was, however, rejected; and all his hopes were again anchored on Olivia, whom he fully resolved to inform of every thing,—and that the very first opportunity.

On the heel of this determination, Olivia herself, who had been giving her assistance
to

to Henry's mother, to mitigate the sharp agonies which his father had been enduring, came running into the room, and presented a letter to Henry,—saying, as she delivered it,—“I hope it will prove a cordial to your spirits, which I know your father's sickness must depress;—it comes from the abbey,—and who knows but our good stars may be working together so far for our good, that Sir Guise may permit his angel of a daughter to be upon the same terms at the castle, as are enjoyed by his son Charles?—For know, my Henry, I am a great dreamer, and I have had a sort of vision about this:—I see, 'tis a lady's hand.—I would lay any thing, we shall find that our Caroline is the writer;—but even if it should be so, and my dream *should* come true, we must keep it to ourselves, and not say a word of it to any of the family,—because it will be so delightful to have the secret between us, and divulge it just at the time we have brought about a reconciliation.—Ah! Henry, if you and I should, after all, be the means of such a happiness, how com-

fortable will it be to all parties!—for it is such a shocking thing for neighbours to bear malice for so long a time!—and though, perhaps, we can do little good with Sir Guise, we might put up with a great deal from him, to be in friendship with Miss Stuart.—Do, then, read the letter, and tell me what it says,—that is, if it goes at all to my last night's dream.”

Henry, who knew at the first glance, that the letter was directed at least by Caroline, had been trying by every means in his power to conceal his agitation,—when a servant came to desire Olivia's immediate attendance upon Lady Fitzorton. She had scarcely left the room when the trembling and impatient Henry opened the billet, which contained these words :

“Scarcely can I hold my pen,—such is the satisfaction of my heart, to inform you I write by the command of my father, to invite you to the abbey, where we may enter into the particulars of the extraordinary, but endearing and renovating encounter of yesterday morning,—an encounter which
pre-

presented to my view three persons I had long most anxiously desired again to behold,—Jane Atwood, my lovely playmate Olivia, and Henry Fitzorton.—Do not write any thing in reply to this hasty billet, part of which is confidential,—but *come yourself* to-morrow noon, the time appointed by my father to receive you. You will imagine how I rejoice in a reconciliation betwixt my father, and my brother's dearest friend.—Ah, Henry! guess the emotions of Caroline Stuart.”

He had just finished the perusal, when True George came hastily into the apartment, presenting another letter,—“Just brought by the post, your honour: and I came with it as quick as I could, because I believe 'tis from 'Squire Stuart the lieutenant, and I thought it might bring your honour good news.”

Honest George was partly right in his conjecture;—it brought tidings at once of the most pleasing and painful nature.—Charles acquainted his friend,—“that he would listen to no terms of accommodation with his father, unless the restoration of

Henry at the abbey was made the preliminary condition of the treaty;" observing to his father, that—"he had plainly discovered the strange conduct of Caroline had originated in her father's cruel commands."—Then followed these expressions:—"If you ever, Sir, hope to see the face of the son whose heart you have almost broken,—re-invite my injured friend to your house, where I have my good colonel's leave to give him the meeting, and shall hope to be at the abbey almost as soon as this letter: and in a full confidence of your treating my friend as he deserves,—I am your dutiful Charles Stuart."—"Go then, my dearest Henry! hasten to re-assume your privileges"—so the letter went on—"It is but returning to a happiness I owe to you in kind.—Ah! I owe to *you* far more than I can ever pay, till my sister is your own!—but pardon the vanity of my affection, if I consider her hand as a recompence in full, even for all your pain, for all your goodness,—even for the last—the *commission*:—and yet that *disinterested* office is so—but I accept it—from *you*,—yes I accept it with

with tears—of joy : your brother John too ! noble, generous, manly John!—how shall I ever settle the account with him? — You know not the professional service he too has done me ; my colonel, I find, and your military brother, have been in correspondence for my honour.—The former swore, and, by a hero's oath, the god of war!—it would be sinful to conceal it from me, though our glorious John had enjoined it : yet as I did not promise, 'tis no breach of trust, you know ; and 'tis fit a man should know his real friend.—I have no second Caroline, my Henry, to offer John :—indeed I know but one more such woman in the world :—Oh ! if Caroline could call *her* sister !—but it is madness to think that way ; yet such an alliance would bind up all our wounds. It can never be,—those wounds *must* flow, though the life-blood of Charles mingles in the stream. Had the heart of my friend been captive to my Olivia,—pardon me for the weakness of calling her what she will never be!—I think my own would have been guarded from captivity ;—or reflections on the prior

claims of my dearest Henry would have made me look upon his *choice* with the eyes I look upon my sister, or, as you yourself, Henry, look upon Olivia:—or if a tender idea had at any time obtruded, I would then have expelled it as a traitor, encroaching on the rights of sacred friendship and mutual love.—But, as I know your heart is another's,—as I know the love is not reciprocal, and as I feel she is dearer to me, than the breath I now draw in deep and bitter sighs,—Oh! how peace would return to us all, Henry, did Olivia experience that sentiment for me, that she cherishes so fondly, so fatally, for my friend!

“But why do I talk of peace?—alas! I have never known what it is since last we parted.—The loss of my mother, and the little prospect of my ever being happy with the adored Olivia, preys upon my health, and bears down my spirits.—On these subjects, ever dear and ever fatal to my remembrance, I dare not dwell:—but the only solace in this long absence, which I have been capable of receiving, has arisen from
proving

proving that my own evil destiny has not rendered my heart callous to the happier fate of my friend.—Hasten then, I say, to the abbey:—enable me, my dear friend, by your presence, to support that of Sir Guise Stuart, without forgetting I am his son, or too keenly remembering that he is the cause why I shall never more behold the face of my dearest mother.—Ah! how shall I look—in vain—for *one* of the smiling welcomes of my return! How shall I feel the change!—Your society, therefore, will be even necessary to the dejected spirits of your poor Charles, as well as to our beloved Caroline:—surely some happy event will yet take place, to displace the barriers which appear immovable:—I speak only of those which oppose the union of my friend and sister;—for myself, alas! a barrier stronger even than the errors of *my* father, or the just indignation of yours, opposes my every hope of happiness with Olivia,—even her own cold indifference to me, and her heart's warmest though unrequited attachment to my friend.—

Accursed fortune!—yet, by heaven, I would rather unite myself to a fiend who loves me, than to a seraph who could not give me the heart. They talk of a war, Henry! would it were come!—selfish, cruel, murderous, as is the wish to thousands of the human race,—I cannot but exclaim, would it were come!—My fatal passion seems to gain such strength, as to render me weak to every other tie,—even to that which holds me to my species. It is not without difficulty, I conceal my sufferings from the excellent colonel:—“You droop, Stuart,” said he to me this morning, taking me by the hand, but with a smile of encouragement: “you droop, my lad.—I am no talker, Charles: but do you want any thing within my compass?—I do not desire to clog you with obligation: I shall therefore only ask, would you borrow?—I have heard your father is not so liberal as his son is deserving.—Or is there an enemy here” (laying his hand on my heart) “got into the breast-work, and in possession of this little fort?—Is there mutiny within?—I do not, however, ask for love secrets;

secrets; and if I did, you, perhaps, might be disobeying orders even to your colonel;—Cupid is greater than a generalissimo, and takes command of all the armies in the world,—field-marshal, my lad, of the universe.—But how is this? I hear you are going to give me up;—your friend, Henry Fitzorton, I find, has procured you an advance;—I wish it had not taken you out of this regiment: but”—“I wish so too, sir,” said I.—“But,”—replied the colonel,—“it takes you to one in which that Henry Fitzorton’s brother John is captain, and may one day have the command;—and so, as it moves you only from one friend to another, I must learn to be content.”—The generous man shook me by the hand, and walked away. I shall bid adieu to him, and to many of my valuable brother officers, with infinite regret;—and, be assured, amongst all my cares, I am not insensible, that your generous heart, assisted, I cannot but think, by your good father’s heart, should have fixed me in the regiment of John Fitzorton.—Why, Henry, have you interdicted the sub-

ject?—but alas! military and every other ambition, but that which cannot be gratified, is, I fear, dying in my bosom:—an unfortunate passion alone lives there:—it will consume me, Henry: I shall grow insensible to every thing else;—no, surely, the affection I have for my Henry Fitzorton will survive the general wreck, and holy friendship be preserved entire, amidst the ruins of Charles Stuart.”

So various were the emotions which the perusal of Caroline's billet and this letter occasioned, that Henry could scarcely read to the end. Love, friendship, pity, hope, fear, admiration, joy, and sorrow, took possession of him by turns; and at the conclusion, they all seemed to be at war in his bosom. His friend Charles, his brother, his parents, Olivia, and Caroline, tyrannized at once.—The empire was long divided, long contended for:—but love, as is generally the case in such dispositions, asserted its dominion, looked upon all other passions as usurpers, and re-assumed its sovereignty on the throne of his affections.—Caroline Stuart,

art appeared to be fixed there too stedfastly for any usurpation to prevail.

CHAPTER XV.

IT was in this crisis that Olivia re-entered the apartment, eager to know the contents of Caroline's billet, and to convey to Henry the intelligence of his father's being much better ;—she never omitted any communication, which she supposed might obviate pain or promote pleasure.—“ Well!” said she, with vivacity,—“ is my dream out?—does Miss Stuart mention any thing of our yesterday's adventure?—does she honour her playmate with her remembrance?—does she notice Jenny Atwood?—and is there any chance, provided our little plans succeed with all our fathers, of Olivia and Caroline ever becoming friends, invested with the privileges of Charles and Henry?”

What a cruel string of questions,—each kindly conceived, and sweetly delivered!—Henry was, however, collected enough to satisfy

satisfy her, who attributed all the emotions of his ardent love to sentiments of glowing friendship ;—and she entered into the reconciliation of the families in general, and the long-desired intercourse of Caroline and Olivia, in particular,—only in a less degree, and on a much more disinterested principle than himself.

“ Miss Stuart,” said Henry,—“ is so earnest to hear more of Jane, and to pour forth the tribute of praise to Olivia, that she has even persuaded Sir Guise to give me an invitation to the abbey, where I have not been, you know, since the funeral of lady Stuart ;—and Caroline has written in the most impatient terms, to acquaint me with her father’s acquiescence.”

Here Henry pretended to rummage his pockets for the billet itself, and expressed some surprise what could possibly have become of it,—though we are afraid there was very little reason for surprise,—the said billet being, probably, not only in his pocket, but often in his hand, during the affected search ;—and, no doubt, he could have produced

duced it with nearly the same degree of difficulty, as the taking the hand which held it, out of the aforesaid pocket.

But Henry *simulated*, you see, reader ;—this letter having again thrown out the explanatory bill, he predetermined to withhold the billet, and was, accordingly, inspired with a due degree of wonder, what could have become of it.

“Never stand looking for the letter,” observed Olivia, who appeared always fated to help him out of his embarrassments, unconscious that she was thereby plunging deeper into her own :—“never stand looking for the letter !—For heaven’s sake ! go to the abbey directly :—I have heard you say, Sir Guise is a passionate, capricious creature, and has his starts of rage and reconciliation ; and who knows how soon he may change his mind again ?—then we shall all be at a loss for such another opportunity.—Beside, your good father is better, and you can go with perfect ease ;—I need only say to him, you are taking your beloved wood walk,—(you can go to the forest, you know)—and
that

that you were quite in spirits at the thought of his mending so fast.—I am sure every word of all this will be true.”

Henry now observed, “That an epistle was just come, also, from Charles,”—and without any of that surprise or difficulty attending the production of Caroline’s billet, he drew it from his pocket.—“See,” said he,—“Olivia, what a packet !”

There were one or two passages which he could wish to have read to her, as descriptive of his friend’s passion for herself,—hoping, the knowledge of it might lead the way to something favourable ;—for, although his own passion, so far as it depended on Caroline, was now in a better train than it had been for a considerable time,—he felt the situation of his faithful Charles, as one of the most oppressive of the many heavy drawbacks upon his newly-revived hopes.

Unfolding, therefore, the packet, to see whether it was not possible to bring out something like an explanation, of two passions, of which Olivia had, as yet, no suspicion ;

picion;—he was hastily running his eye over the pages, in order to separate the communicable sentiments, from such as could not safely be read aloud,—when Olivia repeated her wish, “That he would repair to the abbey,” promising to hear his friend’s account when he returned.—“You provoking thing, you !” cried Olivia,—“I feel that I shall love the sister as well as you do the brother ;—and here, you are so taken up with your friendship for the latter, that you are losing the only opportunity which may happen this age, of bringing me and the former together.—Upon my life, I shall again suspect you have taken some unwarrantable prejudice against that sweet girl, and do not love her half so well as you ought.—Set off this instant, if you would not have me feel confirmed in this hard suspicion.”

Olivia drew him, betwixt sport and seriousness, towards the door, where Henry exclaimed—“Ah ! Olivia, if you knew the condition of that excellent young man, Charles Stuart, at this moment, your gentle heart

heart would pity him.”—“ His condition !” answered Olivia:—“ good heaven ! has any thing befallen him ?” —“ He is, and long has been, suffering all the tortures of an hopeless passion !” —“ Then I pity him, indeed !” said Olivia,—“ for I do really think, were such a misfortune to have happened to me, it would have broken my heart.—I know myself, Henry, so well,” added she,—“ it would have killed me ;—and, indeed, the certainty of that would be my only consolation. — Poor Charles !—he is an amiable creature.” —“ He is one of the noblest young men upon earth,” answered Henry,—“ and would make the best woman in it the happiest.” —“ What, then, prevents the lady of his choice from being so ?—Can she be insensible to the affection of such a lover ?” —“ I do not believe,” replied Henry,—“ though it has been of some standing, and they have been very often together,—that she yet so much as suspects his passion.” —“ That’s very strange,” said Olivia:—“ you ought to do all you can to assist him, my dear Henry ;—I am sure the kind youth would do the like
good

good office by you ;—nay, he has spoke to me of you an hundred times, not in so animated a manner, indeed, as you deserve, but very, very warmly :—he perceived your virtues wanted no advocate !—I protest, if I knew the lady, I would try all the force of my little eloquence, to win her heart for him.—Why does not his divine sister exert her powers ?—Can any one resist her ?—Me-thinks, we should all confederate, combat, and conquer in his cause :—are you not of this opinion ?”

Here was another home question, asked in the utmost simplicity of Olivia’s heart, which sincerely ached for Charles.—Henry turned round, and walked away to the window.—“ I do not wonder that you are uneasy,” continued Olivia :—“ but what can be the reason of the lady’s indifference ?—Is she already engaged ?”

“ Fatally so, I fear,” replied Henry.—“ That’s terrible !” answered Olivia.

“ And to a man who is himself betrothed in the most solemn manner to another,” cried Henry.

“ Worse

“Worse and worse!” rejoined Olivia:—
“and does that other lady return her lover’s
passion?”

“Entirely!”

“And, I suppose, the gentleman’s affection is as great.”

“It is, alas! it is.”

“I know not, then, what can be done for your poor friend: for the case seems to have shut out all service, all good offices.—I do not see a single opening to promote his suit:—for who, you know, would attempt to divide two hearts already united, to make *any* third happy?—Make the case our own a moment, my dear Henry:—we should never bear even the *sight* of the wicked seducer of the affections of Henry and Olivia, for instance, even though we were both perfectly convinced, all his or her arts would be vain.—I protest, my blood runs cold at the very thought of such a monster!

“Nevertheless, the condition of the unhappy Charles,” added Olivia, after a recovering pause, and finding Henry much disturbed, — “is dreadful indeed! — And I

am

am not surpris'd at the misery I see you are suffering on the occasion;—I now clearly perceive that your sympathising heart has made this one of the strongest sources of your late, alas! too frequent, melancholy;—I cannot blame you for it; it fills my own breast with grief; and I weep that I cannot mitigate it.”

Henry was extremely affected, more especially as Olivia now applied all that her tenderness could devise, to give him comfort;—and, though intended to promote a very different emotion, to fill up the measure of his despair on his friend's subject and his own, she took his hand, and carrying it to her lips, where it received a chaste and delicate pressure,—“How infinitely grateful am I to you, my beloved Henry!” she exclaimed,—“and how grateful ought we both to be to heaven, for exempting us from those agonising trials, which are, and must be, inseparable from hopeless love!—Oh! that your friend could experience the felicity which is permitted you and me, Henry, to feel at this moment, with the sanction

sanction of both our dear parents upon our heads!—I cannot feel my blessed state, without the tears of joy gushing from the fulness of my happy heart.—I see you share my sensations;—long, long may the sacred sympathy continue! and may these drops——” she wiped away the tears which were running along Henry’s pallid cheek,—“may these drops of overflowing felicity be the only ones Olivia’s tenderness or your own shall bring from your eyes!”

“In pity, cease, Olivia!” cried Henry:—
“I can bear no more.”

“Let us separate a little while,” answered Olivia, with the most bewitching accents:—“compose yourself, my dearest friend, and then pursue your walk:—the air will restore you; and be sure you try to make Caroline love your Olivia, as Charles does Henry, when we are all friends.”

Olivia now made an effort to rally her spirits, that she might recover those of Henry.

“When we are all friends, and mixed together, you, I, Caroline, and Charles,—

we may beguile the latter of his griefs:—at least, our loving endeavours shall not be wanting;—I insist, therefore, upon your setting off; and I will give you, as you have so great an undertaking in hand, leave of absence for the whole afternoon.”

Olivia was again leading Henry out, when, recollecting herself, she cried, “But stop a moment: I have had something of yours in my pocket these two days:—your brother John sent it me;—and it is very charmingly finished indeed! My father says, —and so does yours,—it is much more like than when you saw it before; but, for my part, I really think it a thousand times too handsome.”

Before Olivia had finished her prefacing speech, she had taken out of her pocket, and unfolded, a little parcel, which proved to be that miniature of herself, which the conflicting John had painted for Henry, and which was now re-given, by the lovely original, with a grace, and at a moment, which might have ensured its welcome, almost from an enemy,—much more from the
deeply

deeply penetrated, though unfortunate Henry.

As he received it from Olivia, she said, "Tell the truth, now, Henry,—does it not flatter me greatly? Yet do not tell me so: for I should weep, if I were to think your fancy and affection could not draw as partial a likeness as any painter in the world!—so take it with you; and, as I can not, with any propriety, go with you to the abbey just yet, let it be my substitute;—and be sure you shew it to Miss Stuart, and tell her that I send it as my representative; and if it could speak, it would soon make out my dream:—do not forget this, I charge you.—So now I will go to poor Jane.—I declare, Henry, I can never get from you, and must run away at last."

CHAPTER XVI.

HENRY had an anxious desire to make his personal enquiries after his father, but was really afraid to encounter him.—Under the different impressions, therefore, of that tender

tender father's displeasure,—of his brother John's silence,—of Olivia's overwhelming goodness,—of Charles's generosity, and distress,—of Caroline's summons,—and of Sir Guise's mysterious invitation,—he once more took the road that led to the abbey;—at the sight of which mansion, after again reading Caroline's billet, as he past along the great avenue, his heart began to resume its accustomed emotions;—and, as he approached within view of that little window already commemorated in this history, those emotions increased;—and, by the time he gained the grand portico, late so sternly closed upon him, and now to be so wide opened; by *authority*, they totally absorbed every other consideration.

To say the truth, Caroline herself had, for some time, thought it strange,—perhaps taken it a little to heart,—that Henry had not, since the evening of the funeral, made an *effort* to visit at the abbey.—She was satisfied of the great propriety of his conduct; it was certainly what prudence prescribed; and, had he attempted to act otherwise, it

is probable she would have marked out the very line of behaviour he ought to have pursued; and declared herself much dissatisfied, had he not obeyed.—Yet Love, my good reader, is,—as peradventure thine own heart can attest,—a very inconsistent deity, and can very much approve and disapprove, be pleased and angry, at the same time, and at the same thing. Caroline had as lively a remembrance of the parting look she bestowed upon Henry, at the abbey gates, on the night, or rather on the morning after the funeral, as if she had seen it on her countenance in a mirror;—and she thought it expressed enough of gratitude and affection, to hold out a future welcome, and almost beckon him towards her.—There was no immediate probability, indeed, of his meeting with any such welcome, but, on the contrary, every likelihood of a repulse from Sir Guise, and, consequently, from herself;—and yet, perhaps, she would have been better satisfied, had he hazarded this, than, as it appeared to her, to be so over exact, as wholly to estrange himself.

If

If there seems any thing in these observations incongruous to the reader, we can safely refer him to our patroness, Nature,—from whom every word has been faithfully copied. We speak here to readers in general. Of lovers we shall only request that they will consult the little historian in their own bosoms.

Henry's conduct at the funeral, however,—his defence of Sir Guise,—his attention and delicate consideration at the awful ceremony which preceded the affray,—wrought very powerfully in his favour with Caroline; and she was truly desirous of an opportunity to pay him her heart's acknowledgements;—indeed, such desire began to take possession of her the very hour she bade him, or rather looked him, an adieu, and had continued increasing ever since.

Her transport, therefore, at having the power to receive him now by her father's consent, may more readily be imagined than described. To imagination, then, we shall leave it;—but, notwithstanding Caroline's impatience, we are sorry we are un-

able to grant them, or our reader, the pleasing interview, till we shall have shewn him the means by which that consent was obtained ;—for the packet of late ensign, now lieutenant, Stuart, unfolds but a part of these means.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE reader hath in perfect recollection, no doubt,—because it was a very material point,—the worthy resolution of Sir Guise Stuart, to become, at least in his external behaviour to his own family and even to the Fitzortons, an *altered man* :—now, as this could not be done without a considerable degree of address, he resorted to a power, whose aid and inspiration he always invoked, whenever he had any great undertaking to perform ;—and, to conceal the bitterest resentment, and deadliest hate, certainly came under that description. This tutelary power was neither any of the demons above nor below, but, simply and solely, that bosom friend which enabled him

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him to effect his foulest intents more completely than if he had been in league with all the infernal deities,—namely, his own fraudulent heart.—This, indeed, was all-sufficient, as well to suggest evil thoughts, as to devise the means of carrying them into execution ;— and, in the present case, it not only empowered him to conceal the hate and resentment above-mentioned, but to substitute, in their places, the fairest appearances of forgiveness and good-will ;— in short, he was a master in that great and useful science to a determined knave, so finely described by Shakespeare :—

“He could smile, and smile, and be a villain.”

He began to put in practice a system of this kind, immediately after the funeral.—As he sat at breakfast the succeeding day, “Caroline,” said he, — “your brother having thought proper to leave us at such a time to ourselves, we must comfort each other as well as we can.—This is but a melancholy house at present, my dear :—suppose we

were to leave it, and walk out a little into the air:—it may be of service to us both.”

He took her hand, and they walked into the garden.—Meeting Dennison upon their return into the house, Sir Guise exclaimed, “Tell the gardener to be particularly careful of those myrtles in the corner of the hot-house,—they were the favourites of your poor lady.”—“And one of them, I see, is drooping,” cried Caroline,—“as if it mourned her loss.”—“Good Dennison, let *this* be remembered:” continued Sir Guise. Having said which, he held his handkerchief to his face, and shed as many tears as were consistent with his grief. Caroline had herself noticed these myrtles, as she past the green-house, and bestowed upon them many of those drops of real sympathy, which might give her father the hint to counterfeit, thinking that as good as any other piece of hypocrisy, to advance his plan.—A more perfect example of genuine and affected sorrow hath rarely been seen, than what the father and daughter then exhibited.

Dennison,

Dennison, like Caroline, was touched by the novelty of this conduct.—They were soon convinced it was not the start of the moment, by an increase of good humour the next day, and so on, in succession, as well to the rest of the servants, as to Dennison:—and at length the whole kitchen pronounced their master to be, *bona fide*, a new man:—prior to which, Charles had written, but not by Caroline's medium, such letters of reproach and menace to his father, that, possibly, the fear of that which they threatened being put in execution, might have some weight in bringing about this marvellous reformation.—The baronet, however, without communicating the contents of the letters to Caroline, answered them in the most unexpected manner, to the entire satisfaction of Charles, who thereupon wrote the letter to Henry, which has been communicated in a former chapter.

But this was not all.—The conduct of Sir Guise was of the most general kind, and extended even to Father Arthur. He made

ample confession of the errors of the past, promising as large atonement in future.

And in regard to Caroline, he was every day proposing some little plan of consolation,—gave her one of his favourite horses,—and not only allowed Dennison and another servant to attend her, but often accompanied her himself, more than once introducing the name of the Fitzortons, and particularly Charles's favourite and her own, without any other allusion to old grievances than observing that it was a great pity when neighbours could not agree:—there were always faults on both sides:—for his part he looked upon implacable hatred as the blackest amongst the crimes, inasmuch as it was the farthest removed from the relenting mercy of him who is ready to pardon all our trespasses whenever his forgiveness is piously and unaffectedly sought. Holding such sound doctrine as this before Caroline and Dennison,—particularly in the presence of Father Arthur,—he by degrees so thoroughly persuaded these, and indeed the

the whole family, that his reformation and repentance were sincere, that Stuart Abbey now refounded the praises of the man whose vices all its echoes had before so often repeated.

This happy change was attributed by all to the salutary impressions made on the good baronet's conscience when he came to reflect on the fate of his lady. In private discourses of this matter among themselves, Dennison observed, "it was a long lane that had no turning;" and that "it was better late than never,"—recounting, at the same time, an history which he conceived to be in point, "of a poor wretch who had been in a constant habit of all manner of wickedness, till he was turned of sixty, and then took up all at once, because his conscience would not let him sleep a-nights; whereupon he made his peace with God, and was so good a Christian before he died, that, though he was as sinful a creature as Sir Guise before, all the parish blessed him, and went to his burial."

Father Arthur gave the praise of this con-

version where he thought it due,—to the great restorer,—and took more than his accustomed delight to visit at the abbey. For the past week, indeed, he had been an inmate, often wandering in the woods of Stuart, so well calculated to inspire and cherish meditation, till the hour of repast, which he would take with the family,—and then, devoting an evening hour to private prayer, which was his invariable custom, he would remain in social endearment, yielding to all the felicities of his mind and constitution till bed-time.

The happiness of Caroline was indeed extreme ;—her gratitude to her father was in proportion ;—and had she not now and then retired to her chamber to shed a tear of regret to think that her dear mother lived not to witness and to share this blessed alteration, her happiness would have been without alloy ; for, besides the above felicity, a prospect of reconciliation opened once more on the houses of Fitzorton and Stuart. She even had the comfort of hearing, and being herself permitted to mention, the name of Henry

ry with due respect:—her brother was made partaker of her joy,—and her favourite Father Arthur no longer with-held his visits on the score of shunning the house of strife, where he had so often found it impossible to be a peace-maker.

And in so fair a train was the general happiness, that on the day she encountered the party at the manor-house gate she would assuredly have forgot she had a little secret quarrel with Henry, for not doing that, which, had he done, she would have resented,—and have told him the delightful tidings which she had in store for him, had not the sudden appearance of Jenny Atwood, the sight of whom might have thrown a cloud over all these agreeable prospects, made it impossible for her to say or do more than has already been shewn to the reader.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE abbey door was opened to the summons of Henry Fitzorton by the good and trusty Dennison, who gave him a thou-

land welcomes as he entered, and ensured it to him afterwards in the following words, which, after the fashion of the speaker, were delivered as he led the way to the object of Henry's wishes.—“ Joyful news, as I told you, dear squire !—the old gentleman, and God be praised for it, has renounced the Devil and all his works. He's clean and clever another thing,—and he makes us all weep for joy, more than he used heretofore to make us cry for grief. He has made young master happy also !—Miss Caroline is e'en almost aside herself,—and my old wits are about to take leave of me :—and for the matter of that, if I thought master would be at his old tricks again, in the way of relapses as they call 'em, I had rather bid them good bye now ;—for if the Devil should come into the old boy any more, it would be worse than before, your honour knows.”

“ True, very true !” answered Henry, who shaking Dennison heartily by the hand, exclaimed in the words of Othello, thinking perhaps rather of his approaching interview,

view, than the old man's description of Sir Guise, though it would well apply to both,—"If I were now to die," my dear Dennison, "I were now to be most happy!"

"See what it is to be a scholar!—Learning is better than house or land, after all," quoth Dennison;—"but here," added the old man, opening the door of that very apartment from which, some weeks before, Henry had been expelled,—“here is that which is better and prettier than house, land, and learning, put 'em all together!"

Sir Guise and Caroline were both in the room, and both rose to receive Henry. "Mr. Fitzorton," said the former, bowing familiarly, "I had promised myself you would have obeyed a lady's summons more willingly; in which case I should have had more of your company:—but some business calls me out:—I must therefore leave Caroline in the double charge of doing the honours of my welcome and her own." Sir Guise, repeating his bow, went forth.

We see as palpably, dear reader, as if we were now looking thee full in the face, and
through

through that could penetrate into the recesses of thy heart, that thou art making thyself up, in this place, to hear some of the many sublime and beautiful sentiments which now fell from the enamoured Henry, and enraptured Caroline; and, therefore, though it were extremely easy for us,—did we prefer fancies to facts,—to fill a very honest modern volume with what they might be *supposed* to say,—it would be the most difficult matter in the whole art of book-making, to eke out one sentence, with what, for the space of several minutes, they really did *not* say;—and that, for nearly as substantial a reason as ever was given, viz. because neither of them, during that period of time, spoke a single word:—and upon consulting our goddess, (thou rememberest the deity here spoken of, is *Nature*) we find it recorded, in a minute of her own divine hand writing,—“These lovers did not for so long a space enter into discourse, for two of my most powerful reasons,—first, because they had too many things to discourse upon, to know which to begin with,—and secondly,

ly, because their tenderness was *unspeakable*."

Their actions, however, were sufficiently expressive, leaving indeed other language unnecessary. Henry held Caroline in his arms; and Caroline, perhaps for the first time since she became sensible to the thrilling power of his magic touch, did not shrink from his embrace. In this situation they gazed on each other with so perfect a joy, that they were deluged in a flood of those tears which at once enrich and give relief to heart-felt felicity, but are denied to the excesses of woe;—the transports of the first admitting of those salutary streams which freshen as they fall; whilst the paroxysms of the latter are denied this balmy relief. Then it is that the current seems suddenly to be frozen up,—the blood itself congealed,—and every drop of comfort dried by Despair,—who may truly be said, in such cases,—

"To leave no channels for the tide of tears."

Having remained, as we have said, several minutes in this situation of indescribable ecstasy, nature permitted Caroline first to speak,—and, with a frankness that demonstrated she was superior to the little pride of giving pain when it was consistent with her sense of right to impart pleasure, she assured Henry that, as the happiness of now telling him, as far as words *could* tell, *how unutterably* dear he was to her, was derived from her father's goodness, she hesitated not to confess it was the only truly consolatory moment she had experienced since her mother's death,—and, but for that ever-lamented event, would perhaps be the most blissful period of her whole life. “Ah! your own good and just heart, my dearest Henry,” said she, “will inform you what mine has often told me,—that then only can it dare to avow its felicity, when that felicity is sanctioned by those who gave us life.” When she had said this, her beautiful hand was presented in a way that justified her sentiment; and though perhaps the doctrine

trine wandered a little from his late practice, Henry warmly subscribed to the theory with his lips,—giving the afore said hand so impassioned a kiss, that the place on which he thus signed and sealed the assent sweetly blushed in confirmation.

It is probable that Henry would have given in at the same time some other reply suitable to the occasion, had he not been prevented by Caroline, who, anxious to satisfy her heart, in the midst of its own happiness, about that of others, prefaced her enquiries after Olivia and Jenny Atwood, by observing, “that she never should quite forgive either Henry, or her brother Charles, for the niggard manner in which they had both described Miss Clare, who,” said Caroline, “is absolutely a Grace,—a love,—a cherubim!—I have thought of nothing else, Henry, except yourself.—Do you know, she has grown out of my recollection. Ah! in times long past, I remember we flew about our forests, and her and your father’s parks, like wood-nymphs:—
but,

but, to behold her, in a few years, shot up into such a noble yet elegant creature!—I declare, I am surpris'd that my brother and you have not both lost your hearts.”

The tell-tale in his cheek might literally be said too often to put him out of countenance,—and either obstruct or contradict the story of his tongue.—And though there is a blush which denies, and a blush which confesses,—they are frequently confounded and mistaken, even by persons who are thought to be the most skilful interpreters of silent language.—The manner in which Caroline construed the blush before us, may be seen in what follows.

“Even so, as I live! and I suppose you are rival friends!—come, be honest, Henry: have I not a shrewd guess?—Indeed I had a suspicion before, as to my brother: but must confess, I—I—I—yet as I said, it was inevitable! it was—that is,—pshaw! how ridiculous I am! I cannot speak plain to day.—But, do tell me, Henry, which is to be the happy youth? The all-conquering Henry Fitzorton,

ton, doubtless !—Alas, poor Charles ! and alas, poor Caroline ! prithee inform me,—” (here, on viewing certain changes of colour in Henry’s countenance, her own underwent more serious alterations) “do, I—I—I—*beseech* you, instruct me, which of you claims my—my—felicitations ? which my condolence ? —But—no—you may save yourself the trouble :—I perceive who I am to congratulate ! You—yes—yes—you—are the happy man, Mr. Fitzorton : I—I—I—give you joy.”

A few minutes previously to this conversation, Henry had, in obedience to Olivia’s wish, presented, with proper comments as he delivered his message, that lovely girl’s miniature :—but even this, as it turned out, was an addition to his misfortunes ;—for, as Caroline surveyed the well-imitated countenance, her own actual visage coloured to crimson ;—she admitted the excessive likeness, the extreme beauty :—she even pressed it to her lips, and declared it represented an angel in beauty as in graces : yet her voice
faul-

faultered, her eye filled with tears, her lips quivered; and, lest it should drop from her trembling hand, she laid it down.—Henry saw, with strangely mingled emotions, that the sublime Caroline could fear and feel a supposed rival.

Henry could not but make the discovery with a proud and heart-felt consciousness, that he was most dear to her whom he adored: but he still found himself daily more and more entangled in the web of his perplexing destiny,—even as if he had been as dark and insidious a double-dealer as Sir Guise Stuart, the difference appearing only in the motives of their conduct;—but this difference, indeed, forms the distinction betwixt the evils of vice, and the trials of virtue.—While a sensation like this was oppressing him, he fixed his eyes on those of Caroline, and exclaimed:—"Good Heaven! when — when shall the unfortunate Henry be understood by any body?"

"He *is* understood," answered Caroline, taking his hand, and raising the back of it
to

to her lips:—"and thus I solicit forgiveness for the—I hope—almost only unworthy emotions, begun in sport, and continued to seriousness, that ever my bosom harboured.—Oh! may they never more be its guests!—how has Caroline dared for a moment to express a doubt of Henry Fitzorton's faith, his oaths, his honour?—I see and acknowledge the justice of his reproach: the accusing spirit arms his countenance!—Yes, well may that deep indignation which overspreads his face, be kindled against Caroline! Would she had been as incapable of a base suspicion, as he is of the treachery that would warrant it!—and yet, Henry, the strongest test of our affection is the weakness of our fears, even when we are assured they are without a shadow of foundation! But, as indifference never felt those fears,—nay, as indeed nothing but the most unalterable love was ever guilty of this weakness, if guilt it can be called,—surely my Henry will forgive it:—perhaps he will do more than forgive! should it add energy to his own affection,—

if

if it be not more *unjust* than vain in me, to suppose it *capable* of addition,—his pardon is perhaps the only thing which can teach me to forgive myself:—alas! my own anger, I have ever found,—what you have often told me of the self-rebuking of the noble John,—is the most intolerable to bear!—but this is a misery my beloved Henry can never have had cause to inflict upon himself.”

Henry caught her passionately in his arms, still struggling with his emotions: and Caroline, —feeling that the supposed crime of accusation could not be too effectually done away,—entered at once into the plan of happiness, which she earnestly hoped would result to both families, from her father’s present favourable disposition towards them.—“Surely, my dearest Henry, this may be improved;—our beloved Charles may have his share in the accommodation;—I have a whisper for you about him, and the lovelier original of this lovely similitude:—I will tell it you, when you have entirely sealed my pardon, and reconciled me to myself.—

self. — Should it be any way in your power, I know how readily you will promote the happiness of *your* friend, and *my* brother.”

These expressions Caroline accompanied by such atoning smiles, and by those little endearing attentions which are of such immeasurable magnitude in matters of affection,—that, had Henry really been as displeased as he had been delighted, and but half as much in love as the reader knows he was,—he must not only have forgiven but forgotten all her offences;—and, moreover, circumstanced as he was at this oblivious moment, he must himself be pardoned for neglecting to avail himself of so fair an opportunity to explain his Family Secret, at least to Caroline.—Her tenderness, indeed, was as balm and oil poured upon his wounds:—and he had almost lost the sense of anguish in the solace of her love, now as unbounded in expression, as in feeling. But, some farther questions she put him, by way of finishing the whole,—and finishers in truth they were,—tore open again all those wounds, and made them bleed with renovated fury.

“How—

“How—ah how, my Henry,” said she,—“even now *my* father, Sir Guise Stuart, is not averse to our happiness,—how is *yours*,—how is Sir Armine Fitzorton to be reconciled to accept of—of—of——?”

Caroline held down her head; and a very different hue—the hue of fear—usurped her cheek.—“Even now that Sir Guise is become fully sensible of his son’s exalted merits,—how will the venerable father of such a son,” said she, “be persuaded to give his honouring hand to Caroline?—I suppose it has been impossible for my Henry even to glance at this circumstance: but possibly—for I know your generous solicitude—possibly you may have employed your brother John, who, I am sure, bears good will to Charles, and must adore you;—or your brother James may have undertaken to sound your father on this subject:—or the sweet Olivia herself, who has a face and figure to convert hate into love,—by the bye, I cannot think how you came to prefer me to that angel;—’tis well for *me* that love is blind:—I say, Henry, it may be that you have got that charming

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ing creature to speak in favour of Caroline ; though I think, 'tis as strange that she should not love you, and that you should not love her—heigho !—well, how I run on ! yet, methinks I should like to owe the greatest happiness upon earth to Olivia. And poor Jane Atwood !—I blush to think my selfish heart has so long neglected her: she is an old acquaintance of mine :—but it is impossible to express my astonishment, when I saw her with you and Miss Clare,—though, to say the truth, we every one of us appeared to be planet-struck.—Do explain all this.”

Caroline had hardly ended her interrogatories, before Dennison came to the door, rather stealing in than delivering a letter, which, he said, was brought from the castle, in great haste, by Mr. True George, and that he believed it required an answer.—Dennison, however,—having, like George, an high veneration for the privacy of all true lovers, and especially these,—no sooner perceived they were in earnest discourse, than he immediately withdrew, saying he

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should answer the bell the moment their honours thought proper to ring.

Thou hast heard of *pre-sentiments*, reader: peradventure thou hast felt them; at least they may be in the little superstitions of thy secret heart.—The very delivery of this letter, and its coming from the castle, had an inauspicious air and found:—the superscription too in Sir Armine's hand was yet more ominous: and the epistle itself, alas! confirmed all these mystic tokens.

CHAPTER XIX.

LET the reader go back to the state of Henry's mind, previous to the receipt of this epistle,—and he will not wonder that the additional anxiety it produced, was too vehement to be concealed from Caroline,—who, suspecting some misfortune had happened at the castle, earnestly entreated he would break the seal.—He obeyed with a trepidation that denoted he knew not in whose presence he was about to commit this rash act: and having read it to the end,
—in

—in the progress of doing which, Caroline vigilantly watched the varying emotions and passions that took possession of his countenance,—he rose, traversed the room, and stamped with a vehemence which surpassed all former displays of his known enthusiasm. —It was a sudden access of insupportable phrenzy:—he smote his breast, earnestly supplicated pardon of Caroline on his knees, —then flung from her, deplored he had ever seen her,—and execrated his own being.—“My hour is at last come;—long desired, long sought, and now it is arrived.—Death, sudden death, would be relief,—mercy,—blessedness!”—The affrighted Caroline, who lost all her usual presence of mind, wanted power to console him;—speech, colour, motion, and almost life forsook her;—the disordered soul of her lover now having ascended its tremendous climax, he caught her hand, and again smiting his bosom, exclaimed,—“Oh Caroline! ill fated Caroline!—the utmost malice of antipathy never equalled this constant, this cruel conspiracy of love and affection, to which I see it is

the determination of my whole family to sacrifice the lost, the agonizing Henry!—But you, and you only, can prevent it, Caroline.—Behold! read! from my dear inhuman father!—I am bound!—I am at the stake; the fires are kindling around me!—and my peace, my happiness, my heart itself will be consumed, if *you* do not this instant devise some means to save me from being led to the hated altar.”

Caroline took the fatal scroll, and read it with such pauses and ejaculations, as its contents were well formed to create.

HENRY FITZORTON, ESQ.

Beloved Son,

Fitzorton Castle.

“OLIVIA,—the pride of all our hearts, the ornament of both our houses, and the glory of Henry, the sole possessor of her love,—having informed me you are gone on a visit to the abbey, to explain the story of Jane Atwood, I take the earliest opportunity of my being able to hold the pen, to tell you I rejoice to find, by a letter
6 from

from our excellent John, this instant come to hand, that the report is groundless, which insinuated the clandestine disposal of your heart, where your hand must never be given, without forfeiting all claims to the affections of your family,—without indeed, a sacrifice of your father's, mother's, all our loves,—the life too of Olivia, and the death, the annihilation of all your religious principles.—John, I say, consoles us with an assurance that the foul report is the wicked invention of some enemy to our house.—These good tidings have almost recovered me. I shall be able to hold you in my aged arms on your return;—and though this, I trust, will be within a very few hours,—for I understand your friend Charles is not come down,—I thought it a justice I owed my beloved son, to remove from his mind the idea of his father's heavy displeasure, in which his blessed mother's would of course have been included.—But, thank heaven, we suffered only from the poisonous insinuations of some dark assassin:—Olivia's and my dear Clare's peace is not, we trust, invaded.—‘Believe it not, Sir,’ says John in

his letter, 'neither attempt to trace the *infamous falsehood* to its source:—a life most dear to us all might be sacrificed to a worthless slanderer. Eject the aspersion, even out of your and my mother's bosom; forget it ever gained entrance there;—blame almost your own credulity, as I did mine severely, and take Henry to your arms.'

"Olivia is in my chamber while I write; and seeing that some tears had got unawares into the furrows of my cheek, she has been kissing them off without enquiring the cause: and did she know it,—or rather did she know what *had* been the cause of those more bitter ones I have shed upon my pillow, *unwitnessed*,—how would her sweet eyes stream in sympathy!—but, I told her, and truly, that I now wept for *joy*, and for love of her dear Henry, to whom I was sending agreeable tidings.—'Are you, Sir?' said she.—'Then, for heaven's sake, make haste, that he may get them speedily:—had I wings which could aid me to fly half as fast as my wishes, he should have what you have *already* written: and ere he had read those, I would come back to carry him
the

the remainder.'—Henry, I wish not to disparage any amiable woman, whether the daughter of friend or enemy :—but, excepting her who gave to me the blessing of *your* life, Olivia Clare surpasses all I have yet seen : and I can truly say, I love her as well as if she were my own blood ;—I do not think it will be possible to appreciate her more when she is your wife,—which I hope, and trust God, she will be in a few days. You know not how busied Mr. Clare, the too generous Mr. Clare has been, to hasten the hour of your felicity ; but sickness and infirmity, you know, my dear boy, are loitering agents in the affairs of love.—Olivia has lost all patience at this length of letter, and seems to think I never shall have done.—‘ Old men are so tedious !’—I can see that expression written on her lovely face. She has been herself to light the taper, has laid some of her own wax, and a seal which bears *true* love’s motto—‘ *Always the same*’—close to me, and has many times told me your privy counsellor, True George, is ready. Therefore, though I could go garrulously on, even

till I had wearied you, as I have Olivia, I must hasten to bless you, and bid you farewell.

“ARMINE FITZORTON.”

CHAPTER XX.

It is most likely, Henry knew not, in his extreme confusion, more than half the contents of this epistle, so calculated to astonish, perplex, and terrify even Caroline:—the blow precluded all presence of mind, and cut down all energy of character. While she was reading the fateful letter, the disastrous Henry sat rocking himself in a chair, with his hands spread over his face.

Caroline now perceived that she had before spoken but too prophetically,—that she had been long supplanting another woman,—and that woman an inmate of her lover’s family,—each, and all of whom, with the concurrence of her own father, approved of the alliance.—She had not, for some time, the power of utterance, or of motion;—but vainly trying to fold up and return the packet,

quet, she let one of the sheets fall to the ground, and begging Henry's pardon, attempted to pick it up;—then tottering towards the nearest chair, she sunk into it, and remained in tearless consternation, something in the way we before described her in the dying moments of her mother;—and, indeed, an affection cherished, even in the midst of the most trying circumstances, for many years, even till it had twisted with the fibres of her heart,—might now, be said to be in its last agonies, —and from a wound as sudden as fatal.—At length she made an effort to rise, with intent to leave the apartment:—Henry observing her, rose also, and throwing himself at her feet, “I perceive you look upon me to be far more culpable than I am,” said he;—“and you impute to treachery the effect of dire misfortune.—I call, therefore, as well upon your justice, as your humanity, to hear me.”—Without waiting for her permission or reply, he recapitulated, as clearly as he was able, the whole secret history of his situation with Olivia,—with the long train of mysteries,

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perils,

perils, and penalties, that had attended it, from the first moment of his discovering the family designs, to the very instant of his taking leave of her at the castle. He portrayed, in the most lively colours, his esteem, gratitude, and brotherly affection, for that amiable girl;—but asseverated, with yet greater warmth, that she never had possessed, or could possess, any part of that tenderness which belonged solely and exclusively to Caroline.—He then took a retrospective view of the insurmountable difficulties that had hitherto been placed in the way of his explanation of himself, either to his own father, to Olivia's, to his brothers, to Olivia herself, or to Caroline. He enumerated the fundry and manifold attempts he had made towards this, to each, to all,—and the ways and means by which all his purposes were defeated.

The forcible manner in which he painted these sad truths, and the agonies he had endured, from this necessary suppression,—his abhorrence of all duplicity, notwithstanding the appearance of having acted the
part

part of a dissembler,—the nights he had past in the forest, when the castle was irksome, and the abbey shut against him,—brought a shower of tears from the lovely eyes of Caroline.—He pathetically conjured her, now that his cruel condition was at length unfolded, not to add to the miseries he had yet to encounter, by with-holding her tender advice, how best to extend the discovery to the other parties concerned.—Her wisdom, goodness, and unalterable affection, he declared he must now regard as the supporting pillars that were to sustain him against the anger of his parents,—the resentment of Mr. Clare, and the displeasure of his brothers ;—all of which, however, he might consider as unfair and unwarranted, since they had, though with generous intentions, ensnared him, without his consent or concurrence, given or implied in any manner whatever. —Chiefly he relied on his Caroline for counsel, how best to break the affair to Olivia, for whose peace of mind, he swore he would sacrifice every consideration in the world, but the honour, faith,

and eternal happiness of his own.—“ These,” said he, passionately,—“ depend on Caroline;—and should *she* persuade me to break them,—but it is impossible,—they find a counterpart in her own soul, and she will strengthen my resolution, to preserve them, with the most religious care, to my latest hour!—And, as to Olivia, so well do I know the goodness of her heart,” continued he,—“ so many instances have I seen of her noble disposition, that I am convinced,—were it possible to tell her how much and long I have suffered from these continued misconceptions, on what resistless antecedent claims my vows are founded, and what would be the consequence of my breaking them,—she would not only resign all pretensions, but even be an advocate with the three families, to bless and sanction the loves of Henry and Caroline!”—He then observed, in conclusion,—“ that her brother Charles *only* shared the sorrows of his heart;—and, he was confident his friend would aid her to remove them.”—To all this, Caroline only said, faintly, “ I am extremely unwell;
you

you must suffer me to depart :—the terrifying circumstances which you have related, and which I have read, shall, when I am able to think, be duly considered.—But, oh! if you ever wish me to have the power of thinking again, do not detain me now.”—She left her chair with great difficulty,—in tremulous accents bade Henry adieu,—and quitted him in a state, compared to which, probably, many of his former situations of mind, thought at the time to be intolerable, were consoling.

He did not, however, remain long in this condition;—for a gentleman entered the room soon after, who came, in this crisis, as a comforter,—being his second appearance in that character.—This was no other than Sir Guise Stuart, who was extremely surprised to find him alone, and equally concerned at seeing him so much out of spirits.—Henry, hereupon, notwithstanding his former ill-luck when he tried to gain the baronet over to his interest, was now so thoroughly convinced of the sincerity of that gentleman's reform, that he repeated the
heads

heads of what he had said to Caroline,—acquainting him with the abrupt manner in which she had gone out of the room, and conjuring him, by all those things which have most weight with good friends and fathers,—namely, honour, humanity, and the dread of plunging his own child, and the man she loved, in ruin,—to use his strongest, dearest influence, to persuade his daughter to give him such an answer, as, with his own intercessions and explanations at the abbey, might bring about the general satisfaction, and their particular happiness.—All this Sir Guise very kindly promised to do; —“And, surely,” said the amiable baronet, —“if I am ready to forget my wrongs, and acknowledge my share of error in the subjects that divided our families,—Caroline may contribute her part to the good work.—As to poor Miss Clare, that, to be sure,” cries Sir Guise,—“is the worst part of the business; and there is no foreseeing how Caroline may take it;—or, if she could be brought to pass it over, who knows but the lady’s father, and yours, and all your family,

mily, might consider it a stronger objection to an alliance with our house, even than our other domestic hostilities:—however, depend on it, nothing shall be wanting on my part, consistent with my friendship and my own honour.”—After this, Sir Guise stayed consoling Henry for a considerable time.—Caroline’s waiting-woman coming into the room to enquire whether Mr. Fitzorton was gone,—the confederate baronet said in a whisper to Henry, while he beckoned the servant to stop,—“Had not you better hear her answer now?” Henry eagerly assenting, the maid was directed to say, her lady’s company was earnestly entreated for a few minutes;—and, while the girl was going on this message, Sir Guise himself departed, saying, at his exit, and with right dramatic effect, “It will be best to leave you together;—I may be some check upon her;—and it is necessary, you know, to have her own undisguised sentiments;—after which, in the degree that they oppose our own, we may take our measures.”—“You are too good, Sir Guise,” said Henry, cordially

7

dially taking his hand, and drawing it towards his bosom.—As Sir Guise went out, he cried, still dramatic, and at the edge of the scene,—“I must away :—she will surprise us :—I will take a turn in the garden :—there is yet half an hour’s light ; and as you certainly will not think of leaving us till after supper, an opportunity may occur for your telling me what she says ;—hush—I hear her coming down stairs ;—this door, however, will conduct me into the garden by another way.—Be sure you tell me all that passes.”

Whether it was necessary for this injunction to have been repeated, or whether, indeed, any mention of it, in the first instance, was not superfluous, will be shewn hereafter. At present, our entire attention is called to Caroline Stuart, who re-entered the room almost in the same moment her father had left it.—She had been in tears.—Her visage was pale, and her limbs yet trembled.—With less interruption, however, than she had herself apprehended, she at length addressed Henry :—“ Though I expected,

pected, from my maid's report, to find my father with you, I rejoice,—alas! why do I talk of rejoicing?—It is—it is best you are alone,—I know not, whether what I feel at this moment, Henry, deserves so harsh a name as woman's weakness;—but I am ready to confess, that the tenderness which is the cause of it, is almost too much for me to bear.—Alas! the preparation of a whole life, for a history like that you have told,—and for supporting the event which, I—I—I foresee, will—must—result from it—”

“What event?” cried Henry, catching her hand, and looking as if he anticipated the most dreadful of all the evils which can happen to man.—“Do not interrupt me!” resumed Caroline, answering his look of impetuosity and terror, by one of energy, that commanded his patient attention.—“You will not take an undue advantage, Henry, of the tenderness I have, even at a crisis like this, avowed for you.—Ah! what an hour have I past since I left you!—Alas! this apartment seems to be marked out by our ill fortune, as the spot where I am to meet

meet varieties of wretchedness!—Here was my poor mother struck with that which proved her dying disorder!—Here was asseverated a father's curse!—Here! O! why have I forced upon me the remembrance of these successive calamities?—they unfit me to endure the present:—alas! it is so sudden, so unexpected!—it has fallen upon me in so cruel a moment!—Pardon me!—I feel altogether unequal to the conversation I would wish to hold, or the conduct I ought to pursue:—this last dire blow has left me nothing but powerless tears!" Such tears, indeed, fell from her eyes, in overwhelming torrents;—and Henry, instead of drying them up, could only augment the torrent.—Relieved, however, at length, Caroline observed, "that the impression left on her mind by the past intelligence, would be eternal:—that, amidst all her selfish regrets, and the agonising ideas that gave them birth, she had sense and honour enough to be convinced Henry Fitzorton and Caroline Stuart were now placed beyond—so far beyond the possible reach of each other, that,

that, even if her father were to lay his sacred commands upon her to marry, she should, in this second instance of her life, think herself justified in disobeying him.”—

CHAPTER XXI.

CAROLINE paused and wept. — She then recapitulated his situation,—placed before him all the strong parts of his duty, and her own,—shewed, in new points of view, the irresistible claims that Olivia, her father, and both the families had upon him;—she observed, that, though strange impediments had combined to prevent him from an earlier explication, those very impediments had given force to the pretensions of Olivia, who, never suspecting any impediments had existence, had been cherishing a pure affection all the while.—She gently upbraided Henry, for supposing that she herself would deign to become his wife, under the corroding consciousness of having made *any* other woman, who had so many superior claims,

claims, unhappy,—but more especially Olivia Clare, the friend of her earliest youth.—“With respect to myself,”—cries Caroline,—“being in the constant habit of meeting ill fortune, I better know how to struggle with it, in the severest shapes it can present itself:—and, alas! the power that punishes me, knows it is now about to take a form the most dreadful!—perhaps—the most insupportable.”

Caroline’s fortitude again forsook her: and Henry, in the struggle betwixt the contrary emotions of hope and fear, drew his chair, so as to be within reach of her trembling hand, which he pressed in his own,—but could not speak.

“Yes! misfortune, my dear unhappy Henry,” continued the firm but faltering Caroline, “has, I hope, inured my heart to bear what would probably break that of Miss Clare, who has been bred up by every smiling power, in the lap of indulgence,—the pride and joy of two respectable families,—and has perhaps never known any disappointment but what I have already occasioned.—

fioned.—Ah, Henry! how would she hate your Caroline!—alas! yours, did I say?—how would she condemn the cause of all the delays and mysteries which have involved her in one eternal maze, did she know that Caroline Stuart had, like her evil genius, so often robbed her of Henry's dear society!—Yet, alas! this transient pleasure should not be envied me!—for oh, what vengeance follows it! Indeed, Henry, I can scarcely bear the thought:—but—but—it must be borne: and, whatever happens to me, I will endure that, or any other misfortune it may be the will of Providence to inflict, rather than the consciousness of carrying grief, distress, hatred, and, perhaps, death, into the houses—into the hearts of so many persons!—Such an abhorred union, indeed, would now force, even upon you, Henry, a just opinion of my unworthiness.—And ought I not to be displeased that you should believe I would take refuge in Olivia's *mercy* to me, when I had not shewn any to her?—or, that Caroline, bowed as she is by many griefs, could be content to owe the possession of Henry's hand

hand to that bounty which would consign herself, her aged father, and Henry's parents, to wretchedness and despair?—Why, Henry, should you suppose, even Olivia could surpass your Caroline in doing what is right,"—added she, giving dignity to her before humbling distress,—“when Caroline has the advantage of the point of rectitude being first shewn her?—and, had you, Henry, carried on the concealment longer, and availing yourself of my unhappy partiality, made me, under these circumstances, your wife—” something associated with the word *wife* fainted on her lips, as she pronounced it; and many moments past, ere she could conclude the sentence—“and had I afterwards been proved the dire though innocent scourge of your family, how wretched should we both have been!—My disgust—perhaps my hatred even of Henry Fitzorton—might have been the consequence!”

“And will it not,” said Henry, starting up with violence,—“will it not be far worse, to give my loathing hand to Olivia,—and the after-proof come out, that she has
been

been the cause of all my misery and yours?—and, though she never can have my hate, she never had my love, and would *then* be the bane of Henry's, of Caroline's, and of her own happiness."

"No such proof," cries Caroline, more assuredly,— "need ever happen.—You are too good and generous, to treat any woman who sincerely loves you, unkindly;—and kindness from Henry Fitzorton, will be in the place of a warmer sentiment:—nay, it is, in him, a sentiment more tender than the love of an ordinary mind.—At all events, it is in your power to make Olivia Clare the happiest of women! — But Caroline Stuart, whom you have now acquainted with your situation, you could render even more wretched.—There remains nothing for her but accommodation to those severe trials in which, alas! her whole life has been past. Oh! I blush not, though I weep, to say I would not yield up the prospect, which delusive hope recently spread before me, on weak surmises,—or let any visionary clouds, that might gather to darken it, prevail.—

No!

No!—I would embrace whatever might dispel the surrounding darkness!—But, cast your eyes on every side; and you will see the fatal necessity of taking our resolution.”

“Hold!” exclaimed Henry:—“I see the point you aim at:—your resolution would not affect the general peace, to which you would thus sacrifice your own happiness and mine.—I warn you, that it would subvert it.—There is a cause still behind.”

“Alas! alas! there can be none,” interrupted Caroline, still bathed in tears:—“there can be no cause, why I should not here solemnly bind myself by the most irrevocable vow never more to see Henry Fitzorton,—the pride, pleasure, and passion of my soul,—till—till he is the husband—of—of—”

The word *husband* had even a more powerful effect upon the whole frame of Caroline, than that of wife, for the expression sunk her to the earth.

“The husband!—of whom?” exclaimed Henry:—“of Olivia Clare? Oh monstrous! monstrous!”

monstrous!—Oh God!”—exclaimed Henry, raising the convulsing form of Caroline into his arms,—“yes, this barbarous effect, even of the very *thought*, is a fresh proof, dearest life, that, were Henry Fitzorton the husband of Olivia Clare, he would be the most perjured traitor to love and friendship!—he would be the most perfidious viper, to sting and wound every breast most dear;—and Caroline Stuart would become accessory to all his fraud, to all his treachery.—Alas! my love,” continued he, still holding and still caressing the unresisting, the almost lifeless Caroline,—“there is yet another fatal mystery to be explained.”—“Reserve it,” said Caroline, faintly:—“I can hear—I can bear no more.”—“Remember,” said Henry,—“remember that I bid you beware, as you would avoid the despair, the destruction of all that is precious to your blood,—beware of coming to any resolution which shall preclude you from acting as your future duty may prescribe. Your brother can disclose the rest.”

Caroline had been several times waving

her hand, as a sign for Henry's leaving her, assuring him, by such broken sentences as she could utter, that he might depend on her doing what she thought was right,—but that she could not answer to what a degree her illness might augment, if he persisted in the conversation any longer, till she was more recovered. Henry, therefore, went mournfully but hastily out of the room, and by the greatest good luck, or something that answered his purpose just as well, met Sir Guise gliding from an adjoining apartment. He appeared, however, somewhat confused and agitated,—perhaps at seeing Henry uneasy. Few words, therefore, passed between them; and those purported, on the part of Henry, a request to defer the particulars of his discourse with Caroline, on account of her sudden indisposition, till the next day, alleging, that, as his father was confined to his chamber, it would be expected he should sup at the castle.

With this requisition the worthy baronet readily complied,—expressing less curiosity than might have been expected. He therefore

fore civilly demanded of Henry, whether he chose any of the servants to attend him; and, on his courtesy being as handsomely declined, they parted.

CHAPTER XXII.

BUT our sympathy of virtuous and superior woe demands that we should leave Henry on the road to the castle, and return to Caroline at the abbey. This truly amiable and as truly unhappy girl remained without words, and almost without sense, long after her lover's reluctant obedience to her repeated requisition. The first thing which struck her when she felt herself somewhat collected, was Olivia's miniature, which Henry had left on the table in his general agitation. Her examination of this led her to account for several of the mysterious expressions which fell from Henry towards the close of his conversation; for, on his way to the abbey, Henry had penciled on the paper that had been the envelope of the picture,

I 2 ture,

ture, and which remained also on the table, "This shall be a transfer to dear Charles." Thus, not only the words of her brother, which were once overheard and asserted to her by Dennison, but those which Charles himself dropt the same morning previous to his setting out to join his regiment, were brought forcibly to her mind.

It was hence apparent that her brother loved Olivia; and not less evident that Olivia had fixed her entire affection upon Henry; and finally, that both Henry and Charles were, nevertheless, in the strictest friendship. But, although this discovery developed the maze one way, it involved in it another, beyond all her power to unravel; yet one inflexible truth pressed on her in a more unrelenting shape even than it had before,—that whether Henry and Olivia were or were not to be united, Henry and Caroline could never join; since, to suppose that Olivia Clare would ever dispose of her hand to Charles, and that Henry would thereby be at liberty to offer himself to Caroline Stuart, were points equally preposterous.

In

In this state of perplexity, her father entered the room; and although he was in some perturbation from a cause yet untold, he saw his daughter's dejected countenance with parental regret, and observed on it, that, as the occasion had in some measure been related by Mr. Fitzorton, he would not give her the pain of again telling the story, but do every thing in his power to make her happy; saying at the same time, she must be sensible, as well as Henry, how ready he had been to sacrifice himself to their felicity, though he could not take upon him to answer for events, and that he relied upon both her and Henry doing him every justice with his son Charles.

The deeply-afflicted Caroline acknowledged that his goodness was written in the tablets of her heart, and that she was sure Mr. Fitzorton and her brother would ever retain a due sense of it; then entreated her father's indulgence to retire for the night.

Sir Guise granted this petition also, as willingly as he had done the other, and after saying he hoped a good night's rest would

set all right again, desired her to hope the best, called her his dear Caroline, and bade her adieu.

Since the burial of Lady Stuart, Caroline had succeeded to the chamber in which that amiable woman died; and this succession proceeded from the very opposite sensation to that, which, had there not been any separation of sleeping-rooms between Sir Guise and his wife, would have induced the good baronet to change it for another. Indeed he had moved to one at the other end of the abbey; but as this motive might have been suggested by the love which could not endure the sight of the desolated spot which brings to memory the object of affection, no less than by the hate which survives the grave, or by the fear which always attends upon guilt, but more particularly when we view the place where our self-condemned crimes were committed, and of course, where the consequences of those crimes might be said to stare us in the face, inasmuch, as they seem, to the "mind's eye," the ghosts of our past foul deeds,—it is but fair that we leave
the

the choice of these several motives to the reader's own selection.

Certain it is, that the night after the funeral—on the same night, the reader remembers, one or other of the above-stated sentiments kept him out of *any* bed-chamber,—he did remove far from his deceased wife's apartment; and whatever were his motives, those of his daughter, in giving that very chamber the preference to every other in the house, proceeded from the sincere affection which attaches itself to whatever brings to mind the venerated though departed object. Nevertheless, we are ready to admit, the same measure of affection that filled the bosom and memory of Caroline, might be possessed by many other daughters, who might yet find themselves unable to support the sight of any thing their deceased parents had worn, touched, or been accustomed to behold:—and, indeed, we have known some of the most amiable persons fly from their houses, their estates, and their country, on this principle; and, forbid it nature, that we should be supposed to ridicule *any* of the

pious terrors, or even the superstitions of filial love!—we only feel it necessary to say, —as has indeed more than once been proved to the reader,—that the mind of Caroline Stuart, though melting as love itself, had none of these apprehensions. Yet the resignation of her late apartment, which was also precious to her remembrance, was connected with some other circumstances that ought not, as they are in keeping with her character, to be passed over.

We can sometimes better endure the sight of that room where we have seen a dear parent expiring, than of that where we suppose ourselves to have taken an eternal leave of a living lover. When Caroline, at her father's command, had bade, as she thought it to be, an everlasting adieu to Henry, she gave vent to all the tender effusions which are set down for thy sympathy, reader, in a former part of this work; but this little spot, late so dear to her, soon became an object of escape, because she found it more difficult for her to perform the severe task of obliterating Henry from her mind, while from the
window

window of that apartment she looked upon many things that brought his image back too keenly upon her sense ; and, although, in her mother's room, when she was devoid of all the powers of recollection, Henry had supported her in his arms, her reflections thereupon were more divided than from the view of that window.—Has the reader forgotten, that it had in full prospect the grand avenue, of tender memory, the spot where the loves of Henry and Caroline were *first declared* to each other, and, alas ! *discovered* to Sir Guise ? And, to close the whole artillery which it levelled against her lacerated heart, has it escaped his memory, that it carried the eye to the most appreciated part of Fitzorton-castle, even to the chamber of Henry himself ?

Resolved, therefore, to avoid, as much as in her lay, the objects which fed her despair, she tore herself from these temptations, and took refuge in a place where perhaps her grief from one cause was mitigated by the claims from another ; for it is certain that two sorrows equally great, provided they are

of distinct kinds, demand that division of our thoughts, and afford that sad relief, which, in any single calamity, often overwhelms the sufferer.

Her mother's vacated room, then, she for some time occupied; but since her father's turn of behaviour, she considered the prospect from her old apartment as both literally and figuratively clearing up, and had therefore moved into it again. But now that it was overcast by another cloud more dark and menacing than any of the former, she settled the plan of a third alteration even as she was ascending the stairs,—sent her woman for her night-dress,—and directed her steps once more to the room of Lady Stuart.

All that was heroic about Caroline was subdued. She had not only exerted, but exhausted, whatever the natural strength or acquired energy of her mind could supply, to support her in the last discourse she had held with Henry; and from the weariness of a soul more harassed than the frame that enclosed it, she had scarcely gained her mother's

mother's room ere an extreme faintness overtook her, and she fell down in a swoon, in which, without any violence,—indeed, scarcely without any sound, or motion,—she remained till the maid whom she had sent into the other chamber came to restore her,—or, more properly speaking, till persecuted nature by a temporary suspension of life restored herself.

But, with the powers of her life, the sense of that happiness which would have made life desirable, was not, alas! renewed. On the contrary, she revived to the most agonizing reflections. Her present appeared less to be endured than her former fate. To that, if she had not been reconciled, she had in some measure been resigned. She had imposed on herself the severe but necessary task of calling to her assistance whatever would be most likely to keep her heart under some discipline; though she found it impossible to vanquish the host of tender but powerful enemies that had there gained residence: these, however, reason, duty, and time, three of the most able and experienced

I 6 generals,

generals, and on whom she wholly relied for success, might at length have routed. But, when the enslavers were almost worsted,—when Love himself, after many desperate skirmishes, and some pitched battles, with the forementioned chiefs, was made a captive, and led out of his citadel in Caroline's breast, in chains,—*then* to have reason and duty not only demand a truce, but throwing down their arms, and, as of old, in the story of the Horatii, run into the embraces of the opposite party, declaring that the war was unnatural;—after such a treaty, approved of by duty, and, indeed, signed and sealed by that awful power,—nay, after both the armies, formed by these potentates, were disbanded, a chosen few only keeping garrison at the abbey, to prevent surprise from the castle, where, it was imagined, some malcontents, not yet brought over, were posted,—*then*, we say, to have the amicable convention broken by an enemy from the most unexpected quarter,—even in the gentle Olivia Clare,—who, without herself being as yet conscious of it, involved the
houses

houses of Fitzorton and Stuart in deadlier hate than that which the daughter of king Priam occasioned ;—this—this was indeed too much !

Such, however, was the case.—Hostilities recommenced :—every passion and every principle mustered their forces,—founded to arms,—and duty, compassion, reason, and *rival* love, were all at once warring in Caroline's bosom.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHEN this amiable but unfortunate girl was left, at her strong desire, alone, she cast a mournful look over the apartment, and derived some little comfort from reflecting that her dear mother, who breathed her last in it, was now in her peaceful tomb.—“ That is some comfort yet !” said she :—“ it is the cordial drop thrown into the bitter cup of my despair !”

Taking from her pocket that handkerchief of which her eyes but too much stood in need,—she felt the little packet that

Henry

Henry left with her, whether discreetly or not, we cannot now stop to consider, for her brother.—Her confusion, at the time it was first shewn her, did not allow her to observe it accurately,—scarce, indeed, to take it from the paper in which it was wrapt, or to do more than lay it again on the table :—indeed, she did not, as yet, know whether it was intended for her inspection ;—for she seemed now to have no memory of any thing but her own weighty sorrows.—On taking it up again, however, it slipped from the silken envelope which Olivia had folded round it.—She once more examined the resemblance of the innocent girl who had already been the cause of so much anguish to the families which she so anxiously desired to see happy.

It is not an easy matter to describe the mixed sensations that took possession of Caroline as she attentively looked on this picture :—how distinct from those she felt on receiving that of Lady Stuart, and the two others, from the hands of her dying mother !—At Olivia's she looked, and to
Olivia

Olivia she spake, as if it were the original—
“Beautiful author of the misery which
awaits us all,” said she,—“dear play-mate,
when life was young,—wherefore are we
rivals?—Yet, how was it to be avoided?—
how could it be possible for thee to live in
the presence of my Henry—of *thy* Henry,
and his thousand virtues, and not give him
all thy heart, even, alas! as I gave him mine?
—And what but that pride which must now
be severely humiliated, could so long blind me
to the certainty of this?—But how is it that
his own has escaped the magic of thy merit
and thy charms?—how has it been possible
for him not to return thy passion?—Yet love
is capricious; else had thy empire been
unquestioned.—Ah! hadst thou honoured
my dear unhappy brother with thy affec-
tion,—for now I see into the source of his
long concealed distress!—Yet, thou art not
my rival, but my associate in grief.—Even
the irreparable loss which Caroline must
sustain, will be no gain to thee, Olivia!—
We must both be wretched—wretched in
the extreme!”

The

The breath of her sighs had dimmed the crystal of the miniature : but her tears falling fast upon it at the same time,—“ Heaven knows,” continued she,—“ I would not willingly obscure thy sight or happiness; nor wouldst thou mine !—Ah ! that we could relieve the misfortunes which I foresee are in store for us both !—for indeed, Olivia, to thy painted image I may, without fear of wounding thee, confess, Henry Fitzorton cannot be more dear to thee, than he was—than he is—and, I fear, ever, ever must be to ——”

She pressed the miniature to her bosom, without finishing the sentence. —“ Yet,” resumed she,—“ in this confession I do not wrong thee,—I do not wrong thee, Olivia;—for I have lost him for ever !—He is gone from me, never, never to return !—And were he thine this moment, or divided from thee, even as he is from Caroline,—such is the severe destiny in which we are both entangled, we must be both miserable.”

In the struggle of these emotions, she had turned the miniature on the other side, which

which presented several little devices, done with Olivia's hair, such as Cupid and Hymen binding Venus with her own cestus ;—and, underneath, a motto in pearls, suitable to the design ;—on seeing which, she uttered many more sentiments expressive of her feelings ; in the course of which, she adverted, for the first time since the death of her mother, to the circumstance of her own and brother's miniatures, which she knew had been in Lady Stuart's possession, and not spoken of at the time when she received the other, on the very bed which was now spread before her. — Thinking, however, they were deposited in some of her mother's drawers, into which she had not yet examined, all thoughts respecting them soon subsided. — That of her mother, however, she drew from her bosom, which had been its “ most delicate lodging ” ever since, and kissed it fervently, — then returning it to its tender but now trembling throne, she resumed her attentions to Henry and Olivia, who appeared by turns to occupy her entire

tire soul.—It is beyond question, that her affection for the one, notwithstanding all increase of misery and impediment, was now at its height;—and her pity for the other, derived, perhaps, partly from fellow-feeling, was no less extreme.

The sense of her father's unwonted kindness, the sincerity of which was not for one moment doubted, relieved her much;—she thought it far better that her sorrows should flow from any but the *domestic* fountain, whose waters of strife indeed are the most bitter we can possibly taste.—“Blessed be God! it is not my father's fault now,” cried she, “that I am relapsed into my former wretchedness, with every aggravation that could be heaped upon it. He, alas!—which is, indeed, one of those aggravations,—partakes my grief, after he had generously sacrificed to me his strongest resentments, and taken my dearest Henry to his arms.”

She then adverted to her brother,—and again taking up Olivia's picture, she exclaimed,

claimed, in a softly rebuking tone,—“ And thou also art the unhappy cause of my dear Charles’s affliction,—a youth scarce less deserving thy adoration than Henry himself!—But for his love of thee, O insensible! he, at least, might have been happy; and in this dread hour of my own woe, I might have looked up to him for comfort, courage, and pity.—He will now, alas! be absorbed by his own griefs.”

She had no sooner uttered these reproaches against Olivia, than she turned several of a more bitter kind, and with as little reason, against herself, whom she accused of cruelty, folly, falsehood, and madness,—recapitulating the several causes of impediment, why neither Charles and Olivia, nor Henry and Caroline, could ever hope, even had their own hearts so arranged matters, to be united by holy vows.—She next pressed the miniature to her lips, and bestowed on it a kiss, in token of her reconciliation and repentance.—In short, she proved in every reflection, she was in love, and in despair:—she proved, indeed, at once, she

she was tortured by all the feelings of her heart, in which jealousy was not the least tyrannic.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WHILE the picture was yet at her hips, the door was opened by her woman, who, seeing her mistress not yet in bed, first announced, and then ushered in, Charles Stuart.—"Dearest sister, forgive my impatience:—I am this instant dismounted from my horse,—but your father telling me you had retired to your chamber at this early hour, I was alarmed, especially as he said our beloved Henry had passed the afternoon here, and had but just left you.—I should have thought such a tete-a-tete,—for my father intimated he had left you together,—under such smiling prospects too, would have kept sleep from your eyes for this week to come!"—"My dear, dear Charles!" cried she, tenderly embracing her brother,—
"sleep was never farther from them than at this moment:—or had they been closed,
surely

scarcely nothing but the sleep of death could have rendered me insensible to the arrival of my ever good and affectionate brother.”—
“Sleep!” answered Charles, surveying her countenance:—“no—those eyes, I perceive, have been but too much awake!—For heaven’s sake, what is the matter?”—“Is not joy, as well as grief,” returned Caroline,—“the cause of tears?”—“Ah! my sister,” cries Charles,—“but that pallid countenance, that desolate air, and the galled borders of those weeping lids, demonstrate a far different cause than that of joy.—I thought to have found you and my friend as happy as mutual love and a father’s authority could make you;—and I came, with all the speed of friendship for him and affection for you, to devise some means that might incline those towards your happiness, who might be averse to it.—And that miniature in your hand!—Has our beloved Henry at last given it to you?—I chid him once, that he had not done it before,—and called him a loitering lover.”

“No,

“No, truly,” said Caroline, sobbing with stifled emotions:—“It is not his.”

“Not his!” returned Charles:—“surely nothing can have happened between you, to make him return your own!”

“My own?” exclaimed Caroline.—“Yes, Caroline,” said Charles:—“I found yours with mine, on that very bed soon after our ever-lamented mother had expired, and gave him both with the benediction of her dying breath, still warm upon them.—He was entitled to the gifts: for, now that saint is in heaven, who upon earth can love Caroline and Charles, like Henry Fitzorton?—I will not think any thing could induce him to give it back:—let me see!—perhaps he has presented you with mine:—but could that make you weep?”

“It *is* yours, Charles,” said Caroline,—“and left with me in trust, to present to you the moment I should see you.”

Caroline gave the miniature to her brother, who, on the first view, exclaimed—
“Gracious heaven! what do I see, my
dear

dear Olivia?—Tell me, sister, I conjure you, —tell me, have our happy destinies been so run together, that while—heaven knows how disinterestedly—I have been labouring for the felicity of Henry and Caroline,—they, by some yet unknown good fortune, have been promoting the happiness of Charles and Olivia?—Oh! if I could flatter my heart that this dear, dear resemblance of all which is most precious, was given by the loved original, to be presented by Henry to Caroline, and by her to Charles!—but that is impossible:—I rave!—alas! it is no wonder!—I love:—forgive! pity me!”

Here, instead of ending his rhapsody, he fell to kiss and caress the miniature, — ejaculating as he gazed, “Is she not an angel, Caroline?—did you ever behold such a brow?—such an eye?—such a lip?—she certainly inspired the artist! who is he?—I could worship him!—why do you not speak?—Oh my foreboding heart! you are weeping still!”

Caroline felt the utmost regret at the sad necessity of dissolving the charm that bound

up her brother's senses, or rather at restoring him to sense, out of that sweet delirium that carried him beyond the bounds of reason, into that delicious phrenzy, which, to such dispositions, in such situations, affords bliss superior perhaps to what reason ever gave.—Finding, however, that he was still impatient,—nay, that he stamp'd and raved for explanation,—she at length reluctantly cried,—“Alas! Charles, would I could continue the delusion till it could be realized!—I grieve to say our disappointments are reciprocal: yet your friend Henry desired that picture might be given,—but told me, you would explain the impossibility of the original ever becoming *his* wife!”

“*His* wife!” reiterated Charles.—“Friendship forbid!—Should I live to see that day!—but I conjure you to tell me all:—if the happiness—the life of your brother be matter of concern, conceal not a tittle of what I perceive is now labouring in your bosom.—The sudden sight of this miniature has indeed hurried me to a sweet oblivion of all my cares;—but I now return to the curse of my

my reason, and the certainty of my despair!—Olivia!—Olivia!—my delight!—my destruction!”

He now again renewed his attentions to the picture,—swore, that, with whatever intent it was put into his hands, it should never go out of them more,—and concluded with asseverating, that, unless Caroline immediately satisfied his heart in all it panted to know, he would quit the abbey that moment, and repair to the castle, to demand of Henry a full explanation.

The wild and extravagant manner in which he spoke, terrified Caroline;—but looking at him with a softness that might have extracted the sting almost from despair itself,—“Alas! my brother,” said she, “could my life procure to you and your friend Henry the bliss you have lost, it should be laid at your feet!”—She then explained all that had happened in the conversation betwixt her and Henry: and when she had brought down her narrative to the deposit of the miniature, she observed, that she referred, for the particulars respecting Olivia and Charles, to Charles himself.—

“ Our dear father, however,” said Caroline, “ deserves our warmest acknowledgements on this occasion :—he has shewn such indulgence, that my grateful soul avows he has made ample reparation for all former mistakes ;—nay, I feel assured, that, as much as in him lies,—oh! that his power were now equal to his generous inclinations !—he will promote the loves of Charles and Olivia. I am persuaded he will.—If for Caroline he could condescend so greatly, what exertion will he not make for the felicity of his darling son ?—But, as yet, my brother, I am to learn how far you yourself are interested in this matter.—I long, yet dread to hear !”

“ O Caroline!” replied Charles,—“ if I have hitherto concealed from you the secrets and the sorrows of my heart, it was from the same generous motives that actuated my beloved friend to keep them from you.”—He then related at length the story of his unfortunate attachment, — the friendly behaviour of Henry,—and the noble conduct of John Fitzorton. — He enlarged upon the cruel kindness of the whole family to him,

him,—confessed that his visits at the castle, like those of Henry at the abbey, were the consequence, rather of love than of friendship:—he particularly dwelt on the manifest impossibility of his ever becoming, in any measure, dear to Olivia, till the passion of Henry for Caroline was declared;—yet acknowledged that he did not see, though he had revolved it ten thousand times in his mind, how such a declaration was to be made:—he averred, if so heart-rending an event as the union of Henry and Olivia were to take place,—though heaven could witness that his friendship for the former could be surpassed only by his love of the latter,—he would not, dared not, think on what might ensue!—“It would break my heart!—it would make me mad!”—cried Charles!—“Would my friend were here at this moment!—why did you let him depart?—Some way must be found to preserve him,—Olivia,—you,—myself,—and all that belong to us,—from the horrors that are impending!—consider of it, Caroline!—oh! consider of it!—consult your pillow!—remember what we

have at stake!—it is an awful crisis!—if there is not any expedient to save us from irremediable despair, what must be the result?—Oh Caroline! for the sake of pity, friendship, love, suggest something:—my brain seems turning as I speak to you.—My sister and my friend alone are in the confidence of my affliction!—it involves themselves!—it will spread to all who belong to us!—Caroline, weigh the matter well:—I am distracted.”

He broke from her, and hurried down stairs, leaving his sister more perplexed than ever: for she perceived too plainly, by her brother's vehemence in the relation, that the designs at the castle were almost ripe for that event which would determine the destiny of all whom it concerned:—the miniature of Olivia had wrought him to a curiosity, whose gratification had proved worse than the mystery of his sister's distress. —In short, she perceived, that Charles had been long as violently in love with Olivia, as Henry could possibly be with herself:—but with this strong and unfortunate difference

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ence in the returns of the passion,—that Olivia was not sensible to, indeed was not conscious of, the tenderness of Charles;—whereas Caroline felt in the bottom of her tyrannized heart, in despite of her disappointment and despair,—that it beat only for Henry.

It was no less apparent to her, that her brother and her Henry had been generously, but unavailingly, playing into each other's hands, to prosper their affection by imparting favourable impressions of each other to the beloved object;—and that, although the interest of Charles, was not, thereby, in any measure advanced, Henry had not acted with less zeal, consistent with the caution it was thought right to observe, than Charles; in fine, that the friendship of these young men was equally noble, generous, and indefatigable.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE vigilant Sir Guise, like a kind parent who has reason to fear his children were unhappy, was upon the stairs to receive his beloved son when he came from Caroline's apartment; — solemnly protesting, the supreme delight of his life would be to see his offspring as happy as their own wishes could make them, — which was an exact compromise betwixt sincerity and deceit; for in the case of Charles it was true, and in that of Caroline it was false. — In fact, he was in some sort alienated from the former, by the almost constant upbraidings he received, on the double scores of his tyranny and cowardice. — Charles, however, still retained much of his involuntary affection: — and if any thing in the world, except the miscarriage of certain great designs which had been long rolling in his mind, could have broken down the bulwark of that impenetrable stuff

stuff of which his heart was composed, it would perhaps have been the total loss of his son's society, so often threatened.

"It is needless, my dear Charles," said this affectionate father,—“to give you the pain of repeating your discourse with Caroline:—I have heard too much already for my peace, and I see you are much affected.—This letter, indeed,” added Sir Guise, “is, of itself, a history of the plans carrying on at the castle:—but do not read it at present: to-morrow morning you will be more able to take measures in behalf of your poor sister, and counteract their stratagems.”

Charles received the letter; and seeing it had been written by Sir Armine,—indeed it was that brought to the abbey for Henry, and left there in his confusion,—“I must read it, Sir,” said Charles, “though every sentence were a poignard, and my life-blood should flow from the wounds.”—He perused the fatal epistle which had already been the cause of so much distress: and when he came to the passages, that men-

tioned the state of the preparation for Olivia's marriage, he burst forth into the most extravagant gestures and expressions.

"Have you come to that part," said Sir Guise, "where Fitzorton insolently talks of the disgrace and *infamy* of an alliance with our family?"

Charles replied to this question, only by a wild, insensible kind of stare.

"And did you take notice, my dear boy, of the faucy air which the proud-hearted John gives himself,—insinuating, than an union with the Stuarts would be pollution?"

"O Sir! breathe not an accent against John Fitzorton,"—answered Charles, recovering himself.—"He is the second young man in the world; and his brother, my friend Henry, is the first;—my obligations to both are infinite; and I love Henry next to—but, perdition! if he marries her!—it must not be!—I will sooner put an end to both their lives,—to my own!"

Charles crushed the paper between his hands,—then opened and read it again.

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His father began to fear he had carried this exploit too far:—he saw with terror these violences increase,—and did not know how soon they might be turned upon himself.

“What is this I see?”—questioned Charles, taking a light to read the passage more clearly.—“Who is this?—Jane Atwood!”

“Jane Atwood!”—reiterated Sir Guise, who, — in his eagerness to shew his son, doubtless for some good reason, this letter,—had forgot what he would at present have concealed:—but after the confusion of a moment, he exclaimed with admirable presence of mind, — “Yes, they have, I understand, hunted up that infamous hussy, in order to fortify themselves with fresh malice, and do me fresh mischief in the country.—Think, Charles, what I am ready to do for the happiness of you and your sister, when I am willing to pass over even this mean insult! — his low paltry revenge!—Jenny Atwood, you know, is the girl, who I told you, ran away from her parish with child, and then put it round the country

forfooth, that I was the father of the brat. —You remember the impudent story, I dare say : but heaven knows, I forgive them all :—nay, my dear son shall even carry my advances to them, for the sake of my children's happiness ;—and, indeed, for that of my own, I will meet my bitterest enemies on the road of reconciliation, more than half way :—as to Jenny Atwood, old Fitzorton, and the furious Mr. John, I will,—I ought, —I am at peace with them all.”

Sir Guise now strung together, and strewed around his pious harangue, many an holy text from sacred, and many a moral axiom from profane history,—ending with this asseveration :—“ Yes, Charles, I repeat, I forgive them all.”

Whether his beloved son was sufficiently collected to hear any part of the foregoing speech, or was a sceptic as to its sincerity, is uncertain :—he only replied to the passage that had reference to Jenny Atwood ;—and to that he said with some difficulty, but with a marked, though obstructed emphasis, —“ As to the poor girl, by

whatever means she found her way to the castle, Sir, I am sure she will *there* find those who will pity and protect her."

"Then you did not expect this marriage would take place quite so soon,"—interrupted the Baronet, willing to shift the discourse.—

"I should not wonder if they were to hurry Henry into it so soon as to-morrow,—especially if they should, any how, hear what confusion *we* are in about it."

"To-morrow!"—raved Charles,—"**What!** Henry and Olivia!—marry! to-morrow!—does this accursed, this murderous letter say so?—Have you heard—did Henry dare to intimate—'Tis well I am come thus opportunely for the ceremony!—I will be there!—yes! depend upon it, I will be there to-morrow!—damnation!"

Sir Guise felt himself now in a worse scrape than ever, and wished he had let the conversation take its course even about Jenny Atwood.—Charles tore one of the sheets of the letter with a vehemence bordering on phrenzy,—put part of the fragments into his mouth, and champed them between his teeth.

The affrighted Dennison came in, saying, his poor young lady had, in a great fright, rung to know what was the matter, and whether her presence could be useful?—Charles rose,—shook the old man by the hand,—begged him to entreat his sister's forgiveness for such unseasonable disturbances; and that if she would try herself to get a little rest, he would withdraw to his chamber, and not utter another complaining syllable, though his poor heart should burst in his bosom. "Bear this message to her, good fellow," said Charles; "and tell her you saw me going to perform my promise:—but let me be called early." Then taking a candle, and bidding Sir Guise respectfully a good night, he went into his bed-room without thinking of any refreshments after the fatigues of his journey, or the greater weariness of contending passions.

Dennison shook his head, as he went at full trot upon his commission, observing as he ascended the stairs,—there must be a place of comfort, bye and bye, seeing that here upon earth there was none,—that high
and

and low, rich and poor, can get no rest in this world for the soles of their feet,—and feeling, besides, that if this had been intended as a place of happiness, his young master, and mistress, and squire Henry, would be as merry as their days were long.

Sir Guise Stuart's morality was all in soliloquy, for he immediately went to bed, though we have our reasons for thinking, not to sleep.

Peradventure, courteous reader, thou art disposed to retire into thy chamber also. Torpid, indeed, must have been thy disposition, if it has permitted thee to nod while the foregoing scenes were representing. But, as a feeling spectator enters into, and may be said to partake of, the exertions of the actor, thy sympathy for the sufferings of some of the principal characters may have no less fatigued thy spirits, to read, than ours to relate; on which presumption we here resign thee to what one of our poets has called

"Nature's soft restorer:"
and while thou art refreshing thyself, we will
endea-

endeavour to prepare something worthy of thy renovated powers.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IT has been intimated that the worthy baronet had heard, or rather overheard, the preceding conversation betwixt his son and daughter. In truth, it is very certain, he knew every syllable of their discourse, as well as if he had been present the whole time. Indeed those parts of him, best adapted to take in the intelligence were, in a manner, present; for, though he could not, in strictness of speaking, be said to be an eye, he had been an ear, witness, and could have sworn to the facts, on auricular demonstration, in any court of judicature, as conscientiously as if he had been a spectator. The worthy baronet constantly put himself in the way of enjoying all the benefits of this mode of collecting evidence; and as to hearing now and then such a character of himself

himself as he knew he deserved,—in drawing which, his servants, or others, would liberally deal forth the words—‘profligate—villain—coward,’ &c. he treated these things as mere matters of course, which were no more able to reach his conscience, at least to *wound* it, than the paper pellet of a pop-gun from a schoolboy’s arm could penetrate the anvil which had stood the heat and hammer of a century in a blacksmith’s shop.

By these laudable means, he knew every body’s FAMILY SECRETS, without any hazard of divulging his own,—which is frequently an unwelcome interruption to the business in hand, perplexing it with adventitious matter. Sometimes, it must be owned, the listener, who is justly said seldom to hear much good of himself, is a little put to it to maintain his post, which the baronet, like the poet,—leaving out only the expletive word “honour”—found, was “a private station.”

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE meditations of Henry Fitzorton on his second expulsion from the abbey, and partly by that very clearing up of affairs so long dreaded, and desired, were not more enviable than those of Caroline. His night scenes, indeed, from this place, were generally gloomy enough ; and some evil planet seemed to rule his destiny whenever he passed along the famous grand avenue, by which he now again fought the castle.

His old habit of holding conversations with himself returned strongly upon him, as he reached the pathway at which the first fatal declaration of his love for Caroline took place. "Since that moment," cried he, "ah! what has been my life, but a succession of mysteries and misfortunes? I am driven from the castle to the abbey, and again from the abbey to the castle, only to be made more and more the sport of my malicious stars! If a gleam of hope breaks
upon

upon me from Caroline, it is instantly clouded by Olivia! If I labour to teach my heart to sacrifice itself to the latter, the former seems to pronounce, that my peace and my vows are broken for ever! Here the misery of my bosom friend! and there the desolation of my own family! Even the approbation of Sir Guise, which I thought a blessing beyond my reach, is no sooner obtained, than another impediment starts up to render that blessing of no avail! I have left those consecrated walls again in despair; and what awaits me at the place to which I am directing my steps? If I unravel the like mysterious causes there, the like effects must ensue,—the tears of Olivia! and the wrath of my dear—dear—father! If I remain silent, which I have already done but too long, that silence will be again adduced in proof of my consent to their disposal of my revolting heart!”

All this time True George was within a few paces of Henry, but said not a word: whenever his master turned, or made any transverse motions, the faithful servant, who had

the legs of a hare though he had not the wings of a bird, was on the opposite side in a moment : his custom, when there happened, as in the present instance, to be any trees or hedges, was to keep as near to them as possible ; and in case of necessity, he was in, over, or under them in the twinkling of an eye.

In truth, this honest fellow, independent on the veneration he bore to Henry for his book-learning, and especially for his quotations from the poets, had long suspected, and for some time past looked upon him, to be absolutely mad ; and from the various soliloquies he had overheard, in which the name of Caroline was so often mentioned, he had set it down that this injury on his poor master's brain had been occasioned by his being crossed in love. But his sense of honour was naturally too great to breathe the discovery which he thought he had made, to any second person upon earth ; and his fear of offending, and indeed, of making his master worse, had, in like manner, restrained him from speaking of it to Henry himself. In
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the day-time, George was pretty easy, thinking Henry sufficiently safe in the society of his friends or relations: but, from the very instant that the evening drew in, he was as assiduously upon guard, as if it was his turn to hold watch on the toll of the curfew; and he attended his master's motions, from night-fall even until bed-time, making it a constant rule not to leave him till he was ordered to take away his light.

This general assiduity had not a little endeared him to Henry, whose gratitude for every degree of kindness shewn to him, whatever was the rank or station of the obliging person, was lively and sincere. Hitherto, however, George's nocturnal attendance had escaped the discovery of his master.

The dexterity and management with which the poor fellow kept sentry upon Henry, is curious.—If any sentence dropt towards evening, signifying his master's design to take his moon-light stroll, or retire to bed earlier than usual, on the pretence of sudden indisposition,—or, if he saw Hen-
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ry more than usually merry or sad,—(for, so well had he studied him, he looked upon both these extremes as symptomatic)—he was from that instant at work.—He had long known, that no impediments of weather could prevent his master's going forth, when the wandering spirit seized him.—If then the night was stormy, or likely so to be, George would be provided with his comfortables, as he called them, according to the state of the element.—He would be as restless in the kitchen, or servants' hall, as his master in the parlour, or 'drawing-room.—George was as great a favourite below stairs, as was his master above;—and his fellow servants found it difficult to make him sit down to a dish of tea; or, if they prevailed, and his hour was almost come, he would swallow it in haste.—The maids jeered him upon this:—one said, he was like a troubled spirit;—another likened him to a bad conscience;—and the butler, who was a great scholar, to the perpetual motion.—Rachel, one of the house-maids, who

who was suspected to have a kindness for him, tossed up her head, and said, "She supposed, the poor devil was in love,—and, that he had some lady or another, who met him every night in a fairy bower:—but for her part, she never knew any good come of forward huffies who went skulking after fellows in lanes and alleys:—if a man follows a woman," said she,—“let him follow her fair and above board;—for her part, she supposed a brat would be laid at the gentleman's door, for all his slyness.”—

—“Lord, Mrs. Rachel,” replies Mrs. cook, —“why, for sartain sure you are jealous:—Mr. George has only got the fidgets; and as for brats,” here she winked with one eye at the coachman, and looked stedfastly at Mrs. Rachel's shape, with the other,—“as for the matter of *brats*,—my notion of theseum things is, that they are to be had, *without* going into lanes and alleys, or out of the house either.—What say you, coachee?”—

Here the cook began the laugh; the coachee, as she called him, continued it; and the rest joined in chorus,—till Rachel would sometimes

times bitterly assert, that "heaven knows, nobody can ever accuse *you*, Mrs. cook, of having brats!—you may thank God for that, however:—look in the glass,—that's all—look in the glass."—At other times, she would content herself with calling every one a pack of slanderous, *enviable* personages, take herself off into her lady's chamber, where she often sat at work,—saying, as she left the room, "It served her right for mixing with a set of vulgar, vandal-goth souls, who were born to the kitchen!—*She* was naturally a parlour-bred young woman."

None of these gibes or jeers, however, had the smallest effect upon George, who heard them out, if he was certain of his master;—and if not, he would often leave them in the midst of their irony, and pursue his designs.—Once, indeed, he was dogged by another of the servants, as far as the outer gate that led into the park: but, luckily, Henry was then a good way forward; and George, turning round, told the fellow, that "if he followed him an inch farther,

farther, or ever served him such a trick again, he would pull the skin over his ears, and throw it in his face, though he were to die a thousand deaths for it!—I pry into no man's business," said George;—"and d*mn me, if I suffer any man upon earth, except my master whose bread I eat, to pry into mine!"—The fellow, hereupon, stole off, while he had the whole of his skin to cover him,—and, as it may be supposed, told every servant in the house: for none ever after presumed to interrupt George,—though it was universally believed he was desperately in love with some maid, wife, or widow, in the neighbourhood, who dared only have a stolen interview with him in the evenings.

George, however, was so kind-hearted a young fellow, and so generally beloved, that every body forgave him, but Mrs. Rachel; and even the man he so dreadfully menaced, exclaimed, "Why, 'tis after a woman, I warrant; and there's no harm in that.—He that won't go out at pitch dark after a woman, ought to be d****d."—But

Mrs.

Mrs. Rachel observed, "Such good-for-nothing forward harlots, who draw young men astray,—and the fellows too, who can like such filthy, nasty huffies,—ought every one of them to be burnt alive."—To which the learned clerk of our kitchen, the butler before mentioned, flyly answered, taking her considerately round the waist, "God forbid, Mrs. Rachel, they should all take flame, unless you are prepared to go off to the other world in a flash of fire, like a sky-rocket."

In short, George made use of as many stratagems, and was as much put to his shifts, to avoid being seen or suspected by his master, as his master put in practice to escape the detection of Olivia, whose custom of becoming, as heretofore, the companion of his wanderings, he had for some time as much as possible prevented.

George, however, was himself in no small hazard of being discovered, as he was now following his master to the abbey;—for when Henry had got almost to the castle-gate, after cursing his fortune at every second

cond step, he all at once wheeled round, exclaiming, in the language of Romeo, whose destiny he considered, at the moment, in some respects similar to his own,—

“Turn back, dull earth, and find thy centre out!”

This he uttered with a rant of natural grief, more truly felt, but with much, also, of the wildness and extravagance of the theatre.

Henry then asked himself, why the Montagues and Capulets should be thus at variance?—Then answered his own question. “My only love sprung from my only hate!” cried he. “Down with the Capulets! down with the Montagues!”

Henry traced such resemblance to his fate in this celebrated love story,—and rose so high in his heroics, as he ran the parallel betwixt himself and Romeo, and Caroline and Juliet,—that he was to the full as much distracted as they could have been.

“No!” ejaculated he, “’tis past! Oh; never more must I hope

“ To kiss the wonder of *my* Juliet’s hand,
Or drink delicious poison from her lips.
Then I defy you, stars !”

At the end of this rhapsody, he set off at full speed, as if carried away by the sentiment:—and he had, indeed, so absolutely made the case his own,—forcing it to apply where it did not, and appearing almost to think he was the identical Romeo, where it did,—that, had not the darkness favoured,—at the sight of a man running as fast as he could towards the avenue, and then hiding behind the trees in the vista,—George would have had good reason to say, with Mercutio, “ A plague o’ both your houses !”

When George thought all safe, he ventured from his hiding place,—but not daring to risque another scene of the same kind that night, suffered his master to go into the house first ; and then stealing softly round to the back gate, of which he had a key, he was in time to slip on another frock, and
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get into his master's chamber, soon after Henry had rung his bell.—The family, and even Olivia, had given up all thought of seeing Henry for the night, and had gone to rest,—one of the servants having observed, while waiting at supper, that young squire Stuart was just arrived.—George, glad that he had escaped so well, went to bed, but not without strong suspicions that his poor master would not be long out of Bedlam.—Nay, the honest fellow began to debate with himself, whether it would not be better, at once, to tell the melancholy, or rather raving, state in which he often saw him, to his family, for fear worse should come of it.—“Who knows but he may lay violent hands on himself, before one is aware?” said George:—“and then what is to become of us?—Heigho!” sighed George:—“Love's a sad thing.—I suppose Jenny Atwood is a-bed and asleep now.—Well, God blefs her!—and God blefs us all!—Heigho!—I'll go to bed too.—I hope I never shall be so much in love.—Heigho!—Yes, I dare say Jenny Atwood is asleep.—Heigho!”

George repaired to his truckle bed, which was in a closet adjoining his master's, where he had begged, long before, he might sleep,—to be within call,—in case any thing should happen in the night.

The good fellow quietly undressed himself: but the affair of Romeo and Juliet, the Montagues and Capulets, had quite fettled with him his master's madness, which he now considered as incurable: and his last words that night were, “ Ah! poor dear gentleman! it's all over with him now, sure enough.—What a terrible thing love is, when it comes to this!—Heigho!—The Lord deliver us!—I wonder how Jenny is to night.—I hope I never shall love at this rate!”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

W HATEVER roses hope might strew on the pillow of Olivia, that of Henry was on this night lined with thorns.—When, for an instant, he dropt into a transitory slumber, all the images of a disturbed imagination and tortured mind rose to his view.—At one moment his fancy represented him tossing in the ocean, at another labouring in mud ;—sometimes his ears were assailed by the shrieks of both Caroline and Olivia, falling in the general ruin ;—and sometimes he beheld his friend Charles pointing a dagger at his bosom.

In his waking hours, he often resolved on a stratagem to escape the union of Olivia, by an elopement with Caroline,—and projected this so as to form a double plot, including the flight of Olivia with Charles.—The violent emotions accompanying this idea, extravagant as it was, operated with such force on his burning fancy, that he suddenly

started upright in his bed, and exclaimed, "Would it were morning!—I will be at the abbey by day-break!—Surely, Charles is by this time arrived!—If not, I will go post to meet him!—Were he at the end of the earth, I would travel towards him!"—Then pressing his repeater, which hung at the bed's head, he found, to his infinite mortification, that it was only two o'clock.

—The sound of his exclamations had pierced the ear of the trusty George; who had himself been kept awake by his own reflections, partly about his master, and partly about himself;—for the havoc he had witnessed in a human breast by disappointment in love, made a very strong impression, and convinced him more fully of a truth he had before begun to suspect, in regard to his own heart.

George was certainly much alarmed at the state of his master, yet no less struck at the prodigious effects of the passion itself;—and as well from the dread of his being one day reduced to the same condition, as from the hope that he should not,—each lover

come

commonly making himself the *happy* exception to a general rule,—he was effectually kept from closing his eyes.

The moment, therefore, he heard Henry's concluding asseveration, that, were Charles at the end of the earth, he would travel towards him,—he leaped out of his own bed, and was at the side of his master's, just as the watch had repeated the inauspicious hour.

“For goodness' sake, what is the matter with your honour?—Can I do any thing for your honour myself?—Shall I go for the doctor?—Shall I call up the rest of the servants?—or the family?—I fear your honour is very bad.—How is your honour's head?—Hot—very hot—all of a coal!—your honour is in a high fever!—let me strike a light.”

“No,” answered Henry, “not so, honest fellow.—I know you love me, George.”

“Love you, your honour! Yes!” though *my* distracted senses, too, should forsake me, —“I'd find, as the play says, and as I have

heard your honour say,—I'd find some interval, when——”

“Go then to bed,” said Henry: “rise at the first peep of dawn:—run to the abbey;—ask if Lieutenant Stuart is arrived, and bring me word, unknown to any body.”

“He *is* arrived, your honour: our coachman told me he saw him ride by the park pales about ten o'clock last night; which must be soon after we—we—that is, after your honour, left the abbey.”

“Arrived!” answered Henry. “Then let my own horse and your's be saddled, and in the stable, ready to mount, by four o'clock. Leave me now; and be sure you are not after the time, my good George.”

“I'll make very sure of that, your honour, by not going to bed any more.—Try to get a bit of rest yourself, dear 'good sir; and I will call you to the click of the quarters, so that you shall be on horseback as the clock is striking.”

George,—knowing this to be the best mode of arranging the business, both for
his

his master's ease, and his own,—did not wait for any objections thereto,—but commending Henry's lost wits to God, shut the door of the chamber, and returned to his own.

At the time appointed, with an accuracy that marked the exactness of his character, he had not only done his work in the stable, but in the house also; for he had made a fire, boiled the kettle, had a dish of coffee, and all his *comfortables*, smiling upon a table, in what was called the hunting parlour, to greet his master, on coming down stairs,—and by calling Henry a few minutes earlier than the specified hour, had allowed time for taking the refreshment.

What was the nature of his master's business, George never enquired. This young man had first been in the service of John Fitzorton, as the reader remembers, while yet a boy, and since a private in John's regiment; and had so well profited by his military education, that he practised ever after towards his commanding officer,—and such

he now looked upon Henry to be,—the law of non-resistance and passive obedience.—Indeed, a slight nod often testified his assent to what was required of him: but most commonly the last word of any message sent him off without any sign or token at all.

Henry, however, having had leisure to reflect on the inconsistency, ingratitude, and even impossibility of carrying his wild scheme into execution,—told George that he had altered his mind as to setting out so early, but should perhaps ride or walk to see his friend Mr. Stuart in the course of the day, and would try to sleep an hour or two now, that he might be ready to attend his own family at breakfast;—and cordially advised George to do the same.

The joy of our worthy domestic, on seeing his master unexpectedly composed, was so great, that he sunk involuntarily upon his knees, exclaiming with much fervency, “The Lord be praised!”—then drawing the curtains, and closing part of the shutter next to the bed, that the light might not prove unfavourable to his master’s slumbers,

—he

—he went on tiptoe out of the apartment, reiterating in whispers, —“ the Lord be praised ! the Lord, of his infinite mercy, be praised !—He may do yet.”

Henry’s fixed resolution, however, was, —let the consequence be what it might, or whatever involvements it might bring upon the abbey, or the castle, or both,—to make a full and free confession of the past and present, and long-established state of his affections, in the course of that very day,—and, indeed, at all hazards, to prevent his union with Olivia Clare, even if the loss of Caroline Stuart, and his own ruin, should be the issue of the explanation.

CHAPTER XXIX.

AFTER turning this, at length irrevocable determination, as he called it, into various shapes,—how best to proceed in it,—

whether to begin by discourse with Olivia, with James, or with his mother, whose heart he knew was his own.—or whether to make his confessions, and his “round unvarnished tale deliver” in presence of the *whole* family,—he lay for some time in a state betwixt sleeping and waking,—a state produced by a violent tension of the thoughts to one of those objects which hurries the animal spirits, till the mind, having fatigued itself and the body, is compelled, from very heaviness of the flesh and spirit, to grant the relief of a pause,—during which we cannot strictly be said either to sleep or wake:—the word, which, for lack of a better, we have for it, is *dozing*, a kind of intermediate state betwixt a vehement emotion and no emotion at all;—the mind still carrying on, though feebly, her former designs, till the body, relaxed and languid, is unable to keep pace with her;—and a person may lie in this state several hours, and find himself, in the end, without any material refreshment.

Out of this dozing then Henry was aroused by a scratching at the door, as from the foot of a dog :—this was presently followed by another, and that again by a whine, which spoke, as plainly as any language, that, whoever might be the petitioner, he earnestly desired to be admitted. As Henry was going to the door, he was saluted by the barking of the said petitioner, accompanied by a smart pat against the panel of the door, indicating that, having done with supplication, the said pat might be considered as a sort of threat to effect a forcible entry in case of longer resistance.—On opening the door, who should make his appearance but little Fitz,—so was he called,—the favourite and almost constant companion of Caroline Stuart.—It had been Henry's gift to that young lady, who was grown so fond of it, partly for its own sake and partly for the donor's, that she never suffered it out of her sight without feeling uneasy.—It had been present, of course, at all the scenes of joy and sorrow which had passed between the lovers, and therefore

fore was much in the good graces of both.

But, how to account for this unexpected visit, Henry could no way conjecture.—However, little Fitz came at the right moment to receive a hearty welcome;—for Henry no sooner beheld his visitor, than he hugged, kissed, and called him as many endearing epithets, as if it had been Caroline herself.—The fancy of Henry, always ready to encourage the illusions of his heart, soon gave to this delightful “airy nothing,” more than “a local habitation.” He called the dog dear little name-fake:—indeed it was at his own desire Fitz had been so honoured;—“For,” said Henry, “it will make Caroline then think of the donor.”—He assured little Fitz, that he was more grateful for his attention now, than at any former period of their friendship for each other, as he was convinced he came on purpose to comfort him in the hour of his despair:—“But how did you find your way to my chamber?—and how long hast thou been sitting at my door, poor fellow?—And why

why didst thou not address thyself to me before?—So thrive my soul, as I would share with thee my bed and board, sooner than with the finest object amidst the works of creation, thy mistress alone excepted.—But what will she say to thy playing truant?—does she know of thy coming?—or did Caroline send thee in charity to Henry?”

He continued this rhapsody much farther; and kindled in his course, till it is to be doubted whether he did not really expect regular replies to those interrogatories.—Be that as it may, we never understood that the dog gave any answer whatever,—save that he had now changed the whine of complaint, to the exulting note of joy;—for it admits not of a doubt, that the little animal was extremely glad to see Henry, who had frequently taken him into the fields and forests, and treated him with the sight of a hare or partridge;—for which, as well as other tokens of good-will, little Fitz, who was extremely well born, and well educated too,—being of the spaniel kind and of a choice breed,—was entirely grateful; so that,

that, in fact, there was no love lost betwixt him and Henry.

But, whatever impression this enthusiastic address to little Fitz might make upon *him*, it sunk peculiarly deep into the mind of True George. The door being open when the dog entered, he heard quite sufficient to convince him that the few hopes he had before entertained of his master's wits being restored, were now over, and that the unhappy gentleman was ten times more distracted than ever.

The various questions he heard put to the dog, gave George the strongest apprehensions even of raving madness: but when Henry, with the utmost extravagance of voice, talked about sharing bed and board with the dog, and giving him the preference to all the objects of created nature except Caroline,—the poor fellow could hardly contain his sorrowful emotions, which, in despite of himself, forced their way between his teeth, as he muttered “Alas! quite gone!—mad as a March hare!—Lord have mercy upon us!—If I thought the case would ever
be

be mine, I'd hang myself at once out of the way! Oh Jenny!—Jenny!—All this for a dumb beast!—very well in his place! I would not hurt a worm!—but a worm is a worm;—and a dog is a dog,—and a dog is a beast of the field;—and what is a beast to do in a man's bed, except a Christian gives him a pat, and away, or so, to get him down,—as much as to say, 'If you please, sir, off my bed, and make room for your betters:' and, to be sure, Christians are better than dumb beasts at any time; and if they a'n't, more shame for 'em.—Poor soul!—quite lost indeed!—gone for ever!—O merciful father! for pity, how mad he is!"

Most of this speech was delivered as George walked to and fro in the long gallery, which extending the whole length of the bedchambers, Henry heard only the words which began and ended it—viz: "quite lost!—mad as a March hare!—gone for ever," &c. To which he replied, "What's that you say?—who's there?—George?"

"Yes, your honour," replied George, giving

giving the matter a turn for fear of making his master worse,—ever an uppermost idea,—“ ’tis only me, sir.”—“ Gone for ever—and mad as a March hare—what are you talking about?” said Henry.—“ Little Fitz, please your honour.—I found, after we—that is, your honour—got home, he had followed us—followed you, that is—from the abbey; so I let him have a night’s lodging in my room, knowing he was Lady Caroline’s dog, and made him a snug birth in the corner: and when I got up he was off; and I was saying to myself,—says I,—he’s gone—he’s lost—and if he is, it will make Lady Caroline as mad as a March hare.—But I see your honour has him safe; so it’s all well. But breakfast waits, your honour.”

“ Well then,” said Henry, “ give this dear little fellow something to eat; and keep him out of sight till I can walk over with him to the abbey; and be sure you let him have what he likes: for, d**n me if I don’t love him almost as well as if——”

“ He shall be taken good care of, your honour, depend on it,” interposed George, lifting

lifting him from the bed, and walking off with him under his arm, before Henry could finish his asseveration.

Henry had always been much attached to, and not a little superstitious about the fidelity and genius of dogs: and this friendly visit of little Fitz was, to his poetic heart, a fresh proof that the canine came very near to the human species, in those matters, barring some very nice and subtle distinctions, about which he would sometimes reason with John, till that philosophic youth would pronounce him, as did True George, sometimes to be mad, and sometimes only merry.

It was in the present case a yet farther confirmation, when, before Henry had left his chamber, little Fitz had given George the slip, and again paid his respects to the lover of Caroline. And at the time of this his second appearance, Henry was offering his devotions to Caroline's miniature. This, he told Fitz, lest he should approach it in an unhallowed manner—this, he told Fitz, was the picture of her they both adored.

“But, you happy creature,” added Henry, you will be fondled by the original when I, perhaps—” He then fell to careffing the spaniel and the picture by turns, and concluded, by exclaiming, as he was going out of his room, “Dear, precious resemblance!—never—never—will I part with thee!—not Death himself shall snatch thee from me!”

The chamber-door was all this time wide open, and the above words were heard distinctly, and the speaker of them seen, by Lady Fitzorton, Mr. Clare, and Olivia,—the two latter at that instant coming from Olivia’s chamber, where the former had, as usual, given her a gentle summons, to see if her daughter, as she always called her, was ready to go down to breakfast; and they met Mr. Clare as he was shutting the door of his apartment.

The trio were all of one mind, as to what they heard and saw. Olivia blessed herself, and cried,—“Dear soul!—how he honours my poor gift!—See madam,”—turning to Lady Fitzorton,—“ought I not to be proud?”—“It gives me almost as much joy as it does you,”

you," replied her ladyship: "for as he was not prepared for our coming, as you see by his agreeable confusion, we may be sure his caresses of the picture are—

"Warm from his heart and faithful to its fires."

"Hey, Henry!" exclaimed Mr. Clare, "what signify your profings, to a bard caught in so poetical a situation?—There's a quotation for him, that describes him in his own way.—For my part, I say nothing:—but were I Olivia, I should be little pleased with the cold compliment paid to my inanimate picture, when the original stood blooming like the morning before him, without his so much as offering to—"

"Come, madam," said Olivia, "shall we go down stairs?"—"With all my heart, my dear," answered Lady Fitz-orton:—"Mr. Clare *will* have his joke, you know."

"You'll follow, Henry," said Olivia, blushing delightfully and tripping down stairs. "Is your friend Charles come? and, pray, how

how fares my sweet play-fellow, my sweet friend?"

Olivia recollected it might not be quite prudent to mention Caroline's name at that instant, and so made the best of her way.

Henry had seldom been thrown into a more awkward situation. The mistake of the miniature, which, on being discovered, he put hastily out of sight, was so extremely natural, and so impossible to be then explained, that he was utterly confounded; and his complexion now almost as nearly resembled the carnation as Olivia's: a circumstance which literally gave a still stronger *colour* to the supposition that the picture he had been so transported with, was the one that Olivia had presented.

What became of little Fitz, we never heard: but it is probable he had shyed off at the sight of so much unexpected company; for he had naturally more diffidence than belongs to favourites in general, whether of the biped or quadruped kind. But, indeed, he might very possibly have been at Henry's feet, and not noticed by either of the parties in their confusion;

confusion; and, for the moment, Henry himself forgot, perhaps, that this "dear little soul, whom he preferred to created nature," had any existence within the bounds of the universe. Be that as it may, Henry went down to breakfast:—but from what happened afterwards,—and, indeed, from what might be expected to happen from the questions which would arise on the unexpected sight of such a guest,—we are rather inclined to think Henry did not perceive his companion till it was too late. Of this the reader will presently form his own judgment.

CHAPTER XXX.

SIR ARMINE FITZORTON, who stood in the great hall which led from the chambers to several of the apartments, encountered Henry as he came down stairs, and received him with an ardour of affection and applause, to which nothing but Henry's consciousness of not deserving it, could have rendered him insensible.

"It is surely decreed," said Sir Armine, embracing

embracing Henry, "that my life is to be preserved by one or other of my children. Twice has it already been in danger, and twice have my sons rescued me!—Here, Henry, is the accursed scroll, whose contents, had they been true, would have been far more fatal than the injury which this aged frame received from Sir Guise Stuart's horse: for I am convinced they would have broken mine and your mother's heart.—Henry, therefore, merits, in a still greater degree even than our beloved John, the title of *his Parent's Preserver*.—I am grateful and I am happy."

The venerable man threw his arms round Henry's neck, and wept;—a circumstance no way inconsistent with the transport either of gratitude or happiness, and which nature often adduces in proof of both.

The heart of Henry, though throbbing with love for Caroline, was by no means unmoved by such an appeal to it. It is more than probable indeed, that at such a moment his heart had little to do with Caroline, or with any thing in this world but with the sacred object in his embrace.

"Oh

“Oh Sir!” exclaimed he, “I cannot,—indeed I cannot bear it! Spare me, I conjure you; for I feel powerfully, that these tears, and the goodness which occasions them, will be more fatal than that paper, whatever it may suggest.—I cannot speak!—my dear,—*dear*, father! I cannot speak!”

“I perceive, my child, thou canst not.—Blessings upon thee! Let us hasten then to those whose affection for you is equal to my own.”

They proceeded towards the breakfast parlour, the door of which was at that moment opened by Olivia, who began to be impatient of Henry’s delay.—“Your tea will be quite cold, gentlemen,” said she, complainingly.

Sir Armine turned his face gently from her, and said, “Give me your hand, Olivia, and let us take a turn or two before we go in.—There, Henry! do you follow my example.”

Henry took the other hand, and they all three traversed the hall for the space of some

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minutes,—Sir Armine attempting to hide strong emotions, and Henry labouring in the same way. Both were unsuccessful; Olivia perceived they had been in tears, and indeed still discovered some which had lodged in the furrows of Sir Armine's cheek.

“Heavens!” said she, “what can these mean?” wiping them softly away with the back of her hand:—“and yours, Henry, are not quite dry,” said she, removing them by the like action.

“Why should we endeavour, my son, to conceal the effects of our transport from any one, but least of all from her who has a right to share them?—Daughter,” continued Sir Armine, “what you have noticed in our countenances, has been produced by the joy of our hearts;—and it was churlish in us to wish to rob you of your just division. This our Henry has—but no matter,—I charge you to love him better than ever, and if he proves to you as good a husband, as he has done to me a son,—as *I* am, thereby,

by, the happiest of fathers, so will *you* be the most blessed of wives. Ask no more questions, but let us to breakfast."

"It is very unfair, however, of you," said Olivia with all imaginable sweetness, as if betwixt sport and earnest, "to have all this transport to yourselves: for I would have you to know I am as fond of weeping for joy as either of you, and am now almost ready to cry with grief, at your cheating me in this cruel manner. And as to being more fond of this creature than I ever was before, I am sorry, Sir, at the necessity of disobeying you in this particular; for he very well knows, that—that—"

"Knows what?" questioned Sir Armine.

"That it is impossible," whispered she; but the whisper was conveyed in another of those stage tones which have so amply been discussed in one of the family conversations; for, when she mentioned to Sir Armine the impossibility of loving Henry *better* than she had done, she certainly intended her lover should hear. Indeed, she resigned her hand to his caresses while this reason was commu-

nicated; and gliding herself between Henry and Sir Armine,—the former in almost an oblivion of every thing but his filial love,—she drew them into the apartment.

As they entered, little Fitz had placed himself in Olivia's chair, and thinking, perhaps, he had waited long enough for his breakfast, was helping himself very cordially to some bread and butter, that stood commodiously near him;—Lady Fitzorton and Mr. Clare having entered into a serious tête-à-tête at the other end of the room.

Olivia, therefore, running to him, said, “Oh! but I forgot, Henry, to tell you about this dear little dog:—he is quite taken with me:—I think he likes the castle better than the abbey.—What is his name?—I see by the collar, he belongs to—to—to—to—”

Olivia checked herself on a cautionary hint from Henry: and, though she could not guess the motive of that hint, as the name of the dog's owner was no longer proscribed, her Henry's wishes were always followed by prompt and smiling obedience.

As Sir Armine advanced towards little Fitz,

Fitz, Henry's agitation was so extreme, he involuntarily took hold of his father's coat, to prevent his examining the collar.

Olivia was taken up with considering the beauty of the animal, so that Henry's situation escaped her;—but Sir Armine gave him such an interrogating look as sent his very blood into his face to answer it.

“Let *me* see, Olivia!” said Sir Armine, stooping down, as if to read the engraved letters.

“Indeed, you must not Sir!” cried Olivia, turning the collar round, till the engraved part was hid under the dog's throat.—“Dear Sir, he does not choose to tell the name of his owner: besides, 'tis a Family Secret:—or, perhaps, he means to change his situation.”

“Then he ought to bring a character from his last place,” said Lady Fitzorton, now first joining in the discourse.

“Very true,” said Mr. Clare:—“so pray Mr. what's-your-name, whom do you belong to?”

“Don't mention Sir Guise! say, he belongs

to Caroline,"—whispered Olivia to Henry,
"and—and—"

Judge, reader, if this was not helping this lame dog over the stile, with a vengeance.

"If you must know,"—said Olivia,—
"the little fellow belongs to Miss Stuart: only, you know, we are not to talk about it, as, perhaps, some other person's name may be on the collar:—and though I know you are all too good 'to turn your *enemy's* dog out of doors,' without his breakfast, I—I—in short, I had half a mind to steal him, and love him for his mistresses sake."

"If you will but help me out, this will do nicely,"—added Olivia to Henry,—*not* in a stage whisper.

"Miss Stuart!"—said Mr. Clare—"then you ought, I am sure, to be jealous, either of the dog or his mistress; for I saw Henry almost devouring him with kisses."

"And I could kiss him myself,"—said Olivia,—"for he's a dear and a love; and if I did not think it would break Miss Stuart's heart, I *would* steal him. Yes, I would, you dear thing!" added Olivia, renewing her caresses:

resses :—" not that I saw Henry kiss him at all.—It was something else I saw him kiss."

— The bloom which accompanied this observation, covered the cheeks of Olivia, and was inexpressibly beautiful.

" Admitted," said Mr. Clare, pleasantly :—" but, methinks, a lover of mine would not a little anger me, if he were to salute the prettiest cur in the world, and my picture, in the same breath ;—however, as that is your business, not mine, you must e'en settle it between you."

" Let you and I, Lady Fitzorton, finish our breakfast as fast as we can, and go on with our conversation, which, as is but too often the case, a puppy in favour has interrupted."

With all these reliefs, Henry had collection enough to say, the dog was a favourite at the abbey, from whence it had followed him, as it had done more than once before, though not perhaps noticed ;—but that, as often as it did, he sent it back immediately, knowing what search there would be after it,—

as he should have done now, had he discovered it in time.

Henry now patted the dog's head,—and said, “he supposed, if he did not send or take it back soon, there would be a search-warrant after it.”

Breakfast now went on smoothly, except that Sir Armine and Henry rather overacted their parts,—the former being too talkative, and the latter too taciturn,—yet both equally anxious to conceal their sensations.

The engraving luckily escaped ;—for the collar bore these words :—“ LITTLE FITZ ; the gift of HENRY TO CAROLINE.”

Mr. Clare and Lady Fitzorton disappeared :—Olivia soon followed, and ran up stairs with the spaniel in her arms ;—and almost in the same instant she had so done, True George came whistling through the hall, calling at every step, “ Little Fitz !—little Fitz ! ”—The door of the breakfast parlour being left open, George came to the threshold, put his head into the room, still whistling for, and calling after, little Fitz.

“ What 's

“What ’s that you say,”—questioned Sir Armine,—“about Fitz?”

George instantly perceived his error, and trying to repair it, answered—“Nothing, an’t please your honour,—but that I was looking for the little spaniel that had strayed from the abbey, and I was saying to myself, says I, (God forgive me for fibbing! *aside*) if he should be lost, the person he belongs to might go into *fits*:—that’s all, your honour:—and—and—Jenny Atwood said,—‘she thought she knew the dog, and—and had a bit of a fancy to see him again,’ your honour,—that ’s all.”

“And that ’s enough,” said Sir Armine:—“go, and shut the door after you.”

George obeyed the word of command in much perturbation.

Sir Armine spoke sternly, and rose himself to shut the door, even while he was giving orders.

CHAPTER XXXI.

“**H**ENRY, I wish to look at Olivia’s miniature,—that which John painted for you.”

Forgetting, perhaps, in his confusion, he had left it with Caroline, for a purpose the reader may remember, Henry put his hand into his pocket, as if to feel for it; and not finding it there, his agitation increased.

“I—I—I—must have left it, Sir,” stammered Henry.

“I mean that,” said Sir Armine, “on which you bestowed, as your mother told me, so many caresses this morning.”

“That, Sir?” cried Henry, his breath almost gone.

“The same,” rejoined his father.—“Mr. Clare asserted, you have heard, it more than divided with you the fondness you discovered for Miss Stuart’s spaniel!”

“Heaven! Sir! what a comparison!” said Henry with vehemence.—“Spaniel!”

“Yes,

"Yes, little *Fitz*," observed Sir Armine, looking searchingly at Henry.

"But, to leave comparisons, fetch me the picture:—perhaps it may be left in your chamber; it may be even at this moment on your pillow.—It ought, by the laws of love, let the original be who she may"—here his eyes seemed to penetrate into the very heart of his son,—“it ought, I say, to be always within reach of your lips. Perhaps it is so now,—your bosom companion! Let us see! and pray, sir, what is this?”

His father pointed to a small piece of ribbon which had, perhaps, in his endeavour to conceal it from the party who surprised him at his chamber door, insinuated itself on the wrong side of Henry's shirt: and pulling at it abruptly, that bosom-secret, which had literally been so long suspended, would then have come forth, and Caroline's well-painted resemblance stood confessed, had not a little contest ensued between the parties.

Henry defended the passes to his breast with his hand, which grasped the frill of his
M 6 shirt,

shirt, and perhaps, the mystery underneath it.

Sir Armine renewed the attack, saying sarcastically,—“What can be the meaning of all this?—Is it not Olivia’s?—Is it not the ‘counterfeit presentment’ of one who is alike dear to us both?—The fair object of the father’s choice, as well as the son’s! what other *could* be cherished in Henry’s bosom?—Is it not Olivia Clare’s: and if I am any longer denied the pleasure of paying it my tender respects, I shall ring for Olivia herself, and ask her consent.”

Sir Armine, without letting go his hold, made a step or two towards the bell.

Henry, aiding his father’s intentions, tore open his shirt in a kind of phrenzy, and cried, “It must—it must be explained! The hour is come!—thank heaven, the hour is come!—I am the sport of every accident, and will here accumulate or put an end to my misery, and all its mysteries, at once.”

“Have a care!” said his father, preventing Henry’s design;—“have a care! your father’s happiness, your father’s life, and
not

not singly his, but the happiness and life of a man venerable as myself, of *her* likewise, who gave life to you,—and more than the existence, probably the self-destruction, of the innocent Olivia.——”

Sir Armine panted and paused:

“These, my son, are in your hands, as entirely as if you were our fate.—Beware then!—I tremble at the omens I have just seen!—Deep plots are discovered by trifling occurrences.—Heaven forbid I should be right in my present forebodings!—oh, if I were!”

Sir Armine’s looks and accents seemed to anticipate and confirm the sentiments he was about to utter.

“If I were, loss of fortune and of life would be as the *tender mercies* of God, compared to what is reserved for the houses of Clare and Fitzorton.”

Henry falling at Sir Armine’s feet, exclaimed, “That God is my witness, Sir,—if the loss of *my* life could prolong the happiness of yours, and of my mother’s, *but one day*,—with a prayer as earnest as ever came from

from the heart of man, I would invoke my death this moment,—invoke it thus on my knees, a posture befitting a son to receive it! — But there are circumstances which would make my existence so hateful, so dishonourable in my own eyes.—This picture, sir, could it speak—” Here he drew it half from his bosom.

“Forbear, Henry, forbear!” answered Sir Armine, closing his eyes, and averting his head:—“I will not look on any thing that may ——”

“I have forborne too long,” resumed the madding Henry:—“enthralled by inexplicable events, I have been too long involved in a thorny labyrinth;—and this, O my honoured, my almost adored father,—this is the crisis at which I must *force* my way out of it.—Hear me, sir! hear me with patience, pity, and parental love, while I confess, —while I explain, by what a series of unavoidable delays, entanglements, and almost more than human interventions, I have, day after day, onward to weeks, months, years,—to the desolation of health, happiness,

ness, all offices, all studies, even the most sacred —”

“Henry!” interposed Sir Armine,—“let me not listen to what would, must, and ought to turn that heart against you,—where, perhaps I ought to blush while I confess, *you* have been,—from the hour of your birth, to this moment, the most cherished of human beings!—If you have in your bosom any passion, which has made its way by stealth, to effect the havoc of soul and body, and derange every pursuit of duty, and devotion,—and, if you rashly carry the resemblance of the unhappy, ill-fated object of that passion in your breast,—let the consideration you owe to the united lives and fortunes of united families,—to your religion, and to your God, whose ministry you have promised to assist, though even that promise seems forgotten,—let all these sacred motives aid you to expel the intruder.”

“I was silent, sir,” interrupted Henry;—“because I could not explain:—but I did not promise —”

“It is still in your power to derive ad-
ditional

ditional virtue from the very sufferings, by which such complicated misery to the aged, and to the young, may be prevented," resumed Sir Armine.—"For my own part, I here declare to you, dearest Henry, that, were my individual felicity, were my single life, the only points of destruction which would result from what I tremble to name, I would give up that felicity, and that life, a sacrifice to you—a willing sacrifice !

"It is enough, my son, I will not expatiate, I will not remonstrate, or reason.—Any attempt to subdue you by the force of argument, would lessen you in your own eyes, even more, perhaps, than they would disgrace you in mine.—I would rather leave every thing to your own graceful duty, and good principles;—and, that I may give you an opportunity of exerting these, I thus raise you from the earth, fold you in my arms, and leave with you *in trust*—what?—all that ought to be most important to you on earth."

In vain did Henry attempt to detain his father;—in vain did he struggle in his embraces,—in vain lift up his streaming eyes, and

and exclaim, "Cruel, cruel perversity of fortune!—Detested dissensions! which have thus placed one duty in opposition to another!—Accursed domestic feuds! which set even the virtues at variance with each other!"

At the end of these disordered, and almost frantic ejaculations, Sir Armine cried out, "I have heard too much.—Half of this indecent violence would distract the rest of my family, and murder Olivia!"

He then rushed out of the room,—perhaps forgetting he had been exhausting himself in similar paroxysms.

CHAPTER XXXII.

By means so apparently insignificant, was this long-delayed and long-projected discovery brought about: and Sir Armine was strongly confirmed in all his former suspicions, by the simple circumstances of the miniature and the spaniel.

"Thus bad begun, and worse remained behind:"

for

for Henry had, hereby, also, more fully convinced himself that the disclosure was likely to be attended, in its progress through the families, with worse mischiefs than had resulted to them or to him, even from the concealment, disastrous as it had been.

But one of these mischief-makers, namely, little Fitz, was destined to be the small, but important, instrument of several other discoveries;—for, while Henry was in the midst of the above distressing reflections, Olivia and her canine companion, with whom she was, by this time, on the best terms possible, returned into the breakfast parlour, where she no sooner perceived Henry alone, than she took up the dog in her arms, and said, “Do you know, my dear Henry, that this little fellow had like to have thrown poor Jane Atwood into hysterics?—He followed me into her sitting-room, where she and your good George were tête-à-tête; and on perceiving the dog, she caught him up, kissed him as much as we have done, and said, ‘it was the very spaniel that was with Miss Stuart, when she

she and Sir Guise paid her a visit in London, and that she heard Caroline say, she would not have any thing happen to it for half her father's estate ;' adding, that it followed her wherever she went, and shared her very bed.—' But I have another reason for loving it,' said Jane. ' Pray pardon me, miss ! but what is constantly in the sight of—of—of an absent friend, you know, miss, is always dear to us.'—Her hesitation made it difficult for her to speak.

" I declare, Henry, when I heard the poor girl say this,—though I was sorry for having been the occasion of her shedding tears on a subject I have constantly endeavoured to keep out of her mind,—I loved her the better for her tenderness, though I knew it was improper for her to indulge it.—Ah ! I know by my own feelings," continued Olivia, " that, had you but touched a flower, a leaf, or the most trivial thing you can imagine, my fancy and heart would hold it consecrated from that moment ;—and, indeed, it would be estimable beyond
all

all price. This locket, for instance,—though that is not a well chosen example either, because it is not a trifle, and is very dear,—I have assured it of my affection, a thousand thousand times.”—Here she took what she described from her lovely bosom, and forgot, most likely, for the instant, that little Fitz was in the world.

“I have heard, or read, Henry,” continued she, “that it is unsafe, or unwise,—some have pronounced it foolish, and philosophers, I am told, have called it indelicate,—for a woman to express the extent of her tenderness, to the man she loves, even if he be most amiable.—Now, that has always appeared very strange: for it is one of the sweetest, I feel, likewise, it is one of the most innocent pleasures of *my* life, to declare how much I esteem, love, and honour my dearest Henry.—Where can be the peril of trusting with all his powers, the man who has long given you an equal degree of confidence and affection in return?—I should hate myself, if, situated as we are, I could
coldly

coldly repress a sentiment, the declaration of which might produce to Henry but the smallest added proof of my attachment.

“But how I am running on?—I know not whether you ought to be angry or love me the better for it.—Do set me right; decide for me, Henry.”

Before this question could be replied to, True George came to say, Lieutenant Stuart was in the blue room, and begged to speak to Squire Henry, before he paid his respects to the family.

“Run to him this moment!” replied Olivia.—“I see, Henry, you are out of spirits.—He and I will make you quite well and happy: and if he assists me in doing that, I will forgive him even for robbing me of this little fellow,—for I foresee he will take him.

“But, alas! he is, you say, out of spirits too; then I will nurse and comfort you both.—Be very particular in your enquiries about Caroline, Henry.—I suppose he is just come down: but you drive every thing, except yourself, out of my head.—I forgot that you must have seen him last night at the abbey.—I wonder what he can have to say

say to you alone.—Shall I leave the dog?—No—he *will* go with me, you see.—I declare, Caroline would be jealous of me, if she were to know it.—If you had but seen the face of True George when Jane fondled the dog—‘I have no notion of people kissing puppy dogs,’ muttered he:—‘they could do no more to christians.’—But suppose we take off the little fellow’s collar—then, you know, Sir Armine—” Henry caught at the hint,—slipped the strap from the buckle, and put the tell-tale in his pocket.

“Delightful!” cried the unsuspecting Olivia.—“Now I think we shall be a match for the old gentleman’s curiosity. But I have forgot to look myself;—let me see!—no—now I think of it, your friend is waiting for you while I am prating.” She then exultingly left the room.

The meeting of Charles and Henry was extremely affecting. They ran into each other’s arms, and forgot, for a while, their sorrows in their embraces.

“Beloved, unhappy friend!” cried Charles,—“I feel, that even hopeless love, since you must have been innocent of my despair,

despair, would have wanted power to dissolve our friendship!—Dissolve it!—No—my poor breaking heart would rather have flown to that friendship for succour and support, as the only good it could expect in the hour of its despair!

“But I do *not* despair, Henry: for although I have heard, seen, and read all that might be distracting on this subject, my friend,”—Charles here held out a letter—“still our fate is suspended by one precious hope—”

“On that letter?” questioned Henry.

“From my father,” replied Charles.—“It proposes, — in a language so humiliating, indeed, that though, as I said, all depends thereon, I am at a loss whether, as a son, I ought to be the bearer—It proposes, Henry, an accommodation between our houses, on your father’s own terms.—It paints, in glowing colours, regret for our long dissensions, and holds out a general amnesty to each offending party.

“Whatever be the result,” continued Charles,—“the motive which led Sir Guise to this signal kindness, has more than atoned

atoned for all that I have suffered from his former conduct ; and, though I greatly fear, because I greatly love, lest his generous effort should be in vain,—I shall remember the intention with my dying breath.—Yet, wherefore should I entertain an unworthy doubt of the success?—If the aggressor can sue for pardon, the man whom he has offended, can much more easily forget his wrongs; — and Sir Armine Fitzorton, I trust ——”

“ Alas !” interposed Henry, “ I have to paint a scene which blasts that hope in the bud.”

He now related what had recently past with Sir Armine, in consequence of the discoveries brought about by Caroline’s miniature, and little Fitz ; and added thereto, by way of filling up the gap in their history, all that had fallen out to oppose the progress of their ill-fated loves, since they parted.

When he had closed the narrative,—at several passages in which Charles shuddered with apprehension, especially at the proofs of Olivia’s rooted attachment to his friend,

*

though

though Henry mentioned as few instances of these, and touched those few as lightly, as possible.

Charles exclaimed, "Notwithstanding all this, something whispers me, a sudden and unforeseen good will result from the operation of this epistle on a heart so noble as your father's. Consider, my friend, we live in a world of wonderful revolutions: and, amongst the infinity of changes and chances that surround us on all hands, who can tell but from this source may spring my happiness with Olivia, and yours with Caroline?"

Until the mention of Caroline's name as a party in this matter, Henry, notwithstanding the constitutional and habitual intemperance of all his feelings, could not help considering his friend's hopes as the mere offspring of a mind violently agitated by the passion that most strongly believes it can reconcile impossibilities; but now he found out, all at once, there was much sound reasoning in his friend's observations;

and he indulged a credulity that shewed he was again in a disposition to believe every thing practicable, which favoured his ruling passion. He exclaimed "Oh, my friend, if the exertions of your now generous father should have influence with mine,—and if the same kind star that induced the divine Caroline to look favourably on me should dispose the gentle Olivia at length to incline an auspicious ear to the suit of my friend—"

"O, if such blifs should be in store for us!" interrupted Charles: "for I can with truth inform you, Henry, that my sister's affection for you, in despite of all that has past, is greater than—in short nothing but the returns which are made by your own heart—and the ardent and unspeakable tenderness with which mine throbs for Olivia, can truly indicate how much you are beloved by Caroline Stuart."

"Let us lose no time!" exclaimed Henry, with the utmost impatience. "Sir Armine ought to have had the important letter long ago. Give it me, my friend:—no,—deliver it

it yourself.—Yet, that may not be right.—Let us think a moment what is best to be done.”

A gentle tap was now given at the door, on opening which, a voice, more gentle than the summons, said,—“Forgive my interruption of you, dear friends: but I long to ask Mr. Stuart how he does: and it is not fair of you, Henry, to keep him all to yourself in this manner, when I will answer for the whole family being rejoiced to see him,—as well as this little fellow,” pointing to Fitz,—“who, you see, asserts his claims to a share of his company, as well as you, Mr. Henry.”

This sportive reproach ensured the fair speaker a cordial welcome; and both the friends seemed to be animated by the same sentiment, namely, that of making Olivia a party in the reconciliation; for they both exclaimed, at the same instant, with very little variation in the expression, and both with equal fervour, “Good Heaven! who so proper, so likely, as Miss Clare, to assist us with her counsel in this exigence?”

—“I beg,” repeated Olivia, “instantly to be made acquainted with the nature of it, if either of you suppose there is a probability of my being useful!” Henry, perceiving his friend too much agitated by the presence of his beloved mistress to proceed, informed Olivia of Sir Guise’s wish of being reconciled to the family, and his almost supplicatory letter to effect it.

“And who can tell, lovely creature,” said Charles, almost forgetting himself, “but that, if it were presented and supported by such an advocate, it might succeed, and then—”

“And then,” exclaimed Olivia, “it would make us three of the happiest of families in the world! you know. I dare say, Mr. Stuart, your friend Henry, who, I suppose, keeps nothing from you, told you my heart throbs again to embrace my ever remembered Caroline. Methinks I feel for her a sister’s love.”—“A sister’s!” ejaculated Charles. “Good heavens!—what a thought!—I will pledge all my hopes of happiness here and hereafter, she would rejoice

joice to call you by that endearing name!"—"Do you think so?" said Olivia.—"Then we shall be all as one family! and this little fellow too," added she, patting the dog upon the head,—"*see! here is the dear creature's spaniel!—Make much of him, Mr. Stuart.—If he could tell your sister how I have fondled him,—you know the old proverb—but what have I to do with proverbs at such a time as this?—I see you are both ready to quarrel with me for loitering on my commission.—Prosper it, good heaven!*"

"Give me the letter then this moment!—Give me the letter this moment!" added Olivia, taking it from the trembling Charles: "and I could almost worship the hand of the bearer of such overtures."

The sweet girl held her own hand, in a way that would have made a novice in the little courtesies of life understand that it might be seized with impunity. Charles conveyed it in a disordered manner to his lips, from which Olivia drew it away, and left the room, saying, "You young soldiers

are so used to carry every thing by storm, that the destined object of your attack has no hope of escaping, when 'tis a poor damsel like myself, but by running away."

Now, though all this was only the play of a friendly and benevolent heart, happy at every prospect of promoting happiness, and at being chosen as the instrument to reconcile alienated minds, the two friends were no sooner left again to a tête-à-tête, than they derived, even from the alacrity of their embassadrefs, a fresh supply of hopes that fortune was turning in their favour.

Charles was too much transported with his having, almost for the first time, ravished, or rather received as a free-will-offering, the beautiful hand of his mistress, to think of or feel any thing but the tumult into which it had thrown him.—He therefore only seized the hand of his friend, and carrying it to that side where nature has thought proper to place the heart,—he cried,—“God of feeling, how it beats!—did you ever feel any thing like it, Henry?” To which question

tion his friend observed, in the words of his favourite Shakespeare,

“There is a tide in the affairs of men ;”

perhaps, Charles, we have now taken it

“at the flood ;”

and if so,

“It will lead on to” more than “fortune.”

In honest prose, his friend assured him he was almost weak enough to subscribe to his opinion. They then proceeded to increase this delightful phrenzy by every means in their power. Superstition itself is not more credulous than love, when, in the very bosom of despair, hope, as if by stealth, darts but one ray upon it.

“And if, after all our disappointments,” cried Henry, whose heart was an admirable sophist, and could, when warmed, overturn the most elaborate philosophy and reasoning, “if, after all our miseries, this unexpected chance should be the ground-work of that temple of felicity to which we might

at length conduct our destined brides,—shall we not—?”

“Shall we not both go out of our senses with joy?” questioned Charles. “Brides! O Henry! how often have we known one happy change lead on, and prove as it were the harbinger to, another! And when Fortune *does* bring her atonements, she is frequently, like a long tyrannous but at length yielding mistress, as kind as she had been cruel.”

The self-deluding friends then enumerated all the instances their memories could furnish of one unexpected piece of good luck producing or having been followed up by others no less unlooked for. Charles related a story of two young people coming together, whose parents, friends, and fortunes, were all in opposition to their dearest hopes.

Henry, bringing the matter more into point, said, he had read somewhere the history of a lady in love with a gentleman whose heart was otherwise engaged; notwithstanding which, after a course of hopeless years, she was married to the object of her affections,

fections, by an accident that had induced the gentleman to transfer his passion from his former love.

“And why should not this be the ultimate event in the case of Charles and Olivia?”

Such was the romance of their hearts, that they could not stop, or indeed stoop, to examine whether this was not a mere rhapsody of the affections in the hey-day of youthful blood. Indeed, the wisdom of reason and of common sense is so unwelcome and disgusting to lovers of this character when the heart is in this sort of delirium, that it sincerely adopts the maxim of the poet, by pronouncing it “folly to be wise.”

CHAPTER XXXIII.

To this delusion of a fond and love-sick imagination, then, did Henry and his friend deliver themselves up so entirely, that they had sketched out, and communicated to each other, several of the delicious plans of happiness which, it was agreed upon, should

take place when Charles became the husband of Olivia, and Henry of Caroline. The soul of poesy was at work in the bosom of Henry. His fancy performed miracles. His head and heart were both on fire. The enraptured Charles caught the flame ; and both enjoyed

‘ Those painted clouds that beautify our days ;’

while reason, half-blushing half-smiling, withdrew ; and that species of madness, which indeed can never endure so stern a power, resumed its reign. The prospect of felicity seemed to approximate as our young friends looked upon it, and to brighten as it advanced : all the impediments which had so long stood like a dead wall of separation betwixt the abbey and castle, were, by the help of reconciling fancy, removed ; and in its stead ‘ a verdant wall,’ like that of paradise, up-reared its florid head. The turrets seemed to smile on each other,—the trees on each estate appeared once more to form their branches into true-lover’s knots, and
extend

extend their 'marriageable arms' till they embraced both houses: the very flowers of the different gardens were, as by instinctive amity, disposed to waft fragrance to each other, 'stealing and giving odours:' and that this courtesy might be the more expeditiously done, Henry's muse was commanded to create a Zephyr on purpose, commissioned to bear upon his balmy wing the rosy sweets of Fitzorton to the abbey, and with no less celerity to fly back with the violet perfumes of Stuart. Meantime, Henry had stationed the Loves and Graces, of which he had a warehouse, in different parts of the groves and gardens, to twist flowers and wreath chaplets, to adorn the brows of Caroline and Olivia. Nay, he had placed Cupid in one part of the forest, aiming a new dart at the tender bosom of Olivia, in favour of Charles, and had set old Hymen at work, in the sacred form of Sir Armine, to build a nuptial bower to be ready for that double marriage which was to complete such infinity of happiness.

Shouldst thou, reader, be either a poet,

N 6

a lover,

a lover, or both, thou wilt here exclaim, "if this be madness let me rave!"—but, if thou art a reasoning being, and wise, that is, cold enough to keep the track of common sense, thou wilt pity or despise those distracted day-dreamers, and not being able to conceive any happiness in such phrenzy, think Bedlam, or St. Luke's, the only places proper to hold our two frantic young gentlemen.

Now as the frozen Caucasus and the burning Ætna do really exist in the natural world, so do these opposite degrees of heat and cold in the human temperament;—and as it would be no less impossible to convince thee of even the transitory rapture of being mentally distracted, than to persuade the man of sanguine disposition,—a Charles or a Henry,—there was infinite gratification in carrying a lump of unthawed ice in the bosom by way of a heart,—we shall attempt no means of reconciling such extremes,—satisfied in our own mind, that intense heat and cold have their separate and peculiar use in the little globe of man's nature,

ture,—no less than in that great globe, the world itself.

Thou knowest, reader, that Greenland is a perfect bagnio to the temperature of the planet Saturn, to whom the sun himself appears but as a little pallid star, and that its inhabitants would expire with heat in our coldest countries ;—while, on the other hand, Mercury is so full of fire, that the heat to which its supposed natives are accustomed, is so excessive, that the most glorious day here would be to them no more than declining twilight, and they would be frozen to death in the torrid zone. — If thou art *saturnine*, therefore, thou wilt not hesitate to pronounce our *mercurial* sparks absolutely mad, and fit only to live in that planet which has been called the bedlam of the spheres.

Yet, grudge not Henry or his friend the momentary bliss they derived from this flame of their fancy, although it may have raged in contrast with thy more sober matter-of-fact sensations. — It was but as a meteor of the night, that appeared and passed away, making the darkness that followed,
the

the more horrible, from the gleam and its coruscations.—Alas! while these children of imagination were triumphing in the visionary happiness that blazed about their eyes, reason and common sense, assuming soon the shapes of a father and mother, entered the apartment.—Sir Armine held the opened letter of Sir Guise in his hand;—"I suppose," said he, addressing the youths,—"you are both acquainted with the contents: your friendship, no doubt, indulges unlimited confidence; and I take it for granted, whatever is imparted to one, is, in effect, communicated to both."

Upon Henry's assuring him he had not seen the letter, and that his friend had only partially mentioned the general purport, Sir Armine gave it to Henry, desiring him to read it aloud.

"TO SIR ARMINE FITZORTON, BART.

"Dear, and long-offended neighbour,

"THIS method of beginning may indicate the friendly disposition under which
I write.

I write.—Both our sons, as well as ourselves, are the victims of our antipathy. — They have pleaded so often for our reconciliation, that I am unable any longer to resist their amicable intercessions.—The bond of union may perhaps, through the medium of our children, be yet more cemented between our families after this reconciliation, than if no fatal breach had ever happened.”

“What does that mean?” questioned Lady Fitzorton, looking at Henry.

Henry directed his eyes to Charles for the materials of an answer,—but, not finding any, was silent and embarrassed; for Charles was at that instant consulting, for a like reason, the countenance of Henry.

“Proceed with the letter,” said Sir Armine.

“But more powerful advocates than even our sons have pleaded for putting an end to our family feuds.—Conscious feelings, my good neighbour, urge me to seek reconciliation.—I have lifted—O it was foul! my hand against mine ancient friend!

and I could even humble my unworthy self in the dust of the earth."

"Should that have been said,—at least in that groveling way,—by the father of a soldier?" asked Sir Armine, darting his eye on Charles.

Charles blushed.

"Young soldier," said Sir Armine, "let us quit this letter! it will agonize you more than any wounds you could receive in the defence of your country. I desire to converse with you on another subject.—Directly and at once, therefore, I shall demand of you, in the presence of my wife who has an equal interest in the matter, whether you have any knowledge of a correspondence which is said to subsist between your sister Miss Stuart, and your friend here?"

"He has, Sir," answered Henry, relieving Charles, who stood irresolute.—"He has the most perfect knowledge of it, and has done his utmost to——"

"Not to promote it, certainly?" interrupted Sir Armine.—"He is of an honourable

able profession, and incapable of clandestine baseness."

"Baseness, Sir!" exclaimed Charles reddening.

"Yes, young man," returned Sir Armine.

—"It would be the last excess of baseness to aid and abet an intercourse which would render every individual of this house, except that rash boy, unhappy, and make him ungrateful and infamous. You are aware of your friend's solemn engagements to Olivia:—but he neglects her!—his friends!—his relations!—his God!"

"Solemn engagements, Sir!" exclaimed Henry:—"I know not of any I ever made to that lady: they have all been taken for granted:—and whatever may be the issue, I here disclaim them;—I here declare, that my whole soul is, has been, and shall for ever be, betrothed only to Caroline Stuart, —even as firmly, and irrevocably as is that of my friend Charles to——"

Henry checked himself a moment, and then proceeded—

"Yes! wherefore should a virtuous but
unfor-

unfortunate passion be thus hid from those who ought earlier to have known it?"

Lady Fitzorton, perceiving the emotions of Sir Armine were swelling into one of those dreadful extremities that sometimes tyrannized his bosom, would have drawn him out of the room, and made signs of silence to Henry, who too much stirred to regard them with his usual respect, exclaimed,—
“No, madam! silence has already wrought this mighty complication of mischief and mistake.”

“Let me hear all! let me hear all!” cries Sir Armine, his articulation almost buried in his sensations.

“It is heard in a sentence,” replied Henry, throwing himself at his mother’s feet.—

“The sister of my friend is not more precious to your son, than is Olivia Clare to—”

“To whom?” questioned Sir Armine, staring wildly, and stammering violently.

“To the unhappy wretch who now throws himself upon your mercy,” answered Charles, falling on his knees before Sir Armine.—“Miserable that I am!—the flame
has

has long been consuming my vitals ; and the life and death of us all depend upon some sudden changes in our favour."

" A sudden change will soon take place," exclaimed Lady Fitzorton.—" Look at my poor husband ! you have already deprived him of speech !—you will destroy him between you ! but his death shall be upon your heads !"

" I shall not die," said Sir Armine, exerting himself after a deep struggle that shook his venerable frame, as if he were contending with death himself : —" I will not die ! the young assassins shall not have that satisfaction."—He paused for breath.

" Then I am to understand, Sir," continued Sir Armine, recovering his utterance, and staggering towards Charles, " that you and my son have availed yourselves of my permission to carry on your friendship for each other, independent of my just resentment *elsewhere*,—I say I am to understand—"

" No, Sir !" interposed Charles, still keeping his humble posture,—
" I have never yet
dared

dared to breathe my unhappy passion for Miss Clare, to herself, or to any other person but my friend, till within these few hours. Even the sister of my heart, from whom nothing was ever shut out before, did not suspect it."

"That is still something," answered Sir Armine, in a tone much softened.

Henry, still kneeling, perceived the favourable moment, and applied his whole artillery of moving eloquence, in the cause of himself and friend.—He briefly recapitulated the most important parts of the mysterious history of their unhappy loves,—he set the honour, generosity, and heroic virtues of Charles, in the most affecting points of view, and concluded his harangue, by observing, while he held the lieutenant by the hand,—that if his father and mother were disposed to prevent unheard-of horror from overwhelming all parties, it could be done only by devising some means to bring about the double nuptials, on which they had set their hearts;—"any thing short of which," says Henry, "I foresee, will bring
deso-

desolation upon the three houses,—desolation, which, as an earthquake, shall swallow them.

Lady Fitzorton, whose affections were much moved, tenderly wept over the young men.

Sir Armine gave a hand to each of the youths, and raising them up, addressed them, trembling as he spake, yet his manner and tone of voice determined.

“Suspect your enemy when he brings gifts; and have a doubly guarded eye upon your ancient foe, when he suddenly changes his frowns into smiles, are long established maxims.—How far these are applicable to Sir Guise Stuart in his laboured professions, I presume not to say.—As for you, Charles, when I have told you, that, added to former impediments, you must pass to the arms of Olivia Clare through the blood of her father, my own, and the life of this afflicted woman,—I shall point to you the alternative of an honourable action, which will justify the trust I have long reposed in
your

your assertions, however I may suspect the
affirmation of others."

Charles eagerly desired a farther explanation.

"Save us, dear youth,—save yourself, your
sister, and your bosom friend," said Sir Ar-
mine,—“by retreating from, if you cannot
conquer, a passion, which it is impossible,
without violating every law of friendship
and hospitality, to indulge,—nay, which,
were it sanctioned by our united suffrages
and assistance, could not prosper with Olivia,
whose happiness and life are contracted
to your friend."

Charles fetched a deep sigh, and shook
his head, as if to express at once the diffi-
culty of complying with the request, and
the too evident strength of argument in the
observation.

"Having done this," continued Sir Ar-
mine,—“your virtue will be complete; for
you will have done all that in you lies to
alienate this infatuated boy from farther
pursuit of a sister, whose very tenderness, in
this

this case, calls upon you to rescue her from herself;—for inasmuch as she loves, must she be wretched,—as it is no less impossible for her to be married to my son, than for you to wed Mr. Clare's daughter,—unless at the sacrifice of every thing in this world, that ought most to be valued by an honest man."

Perceiving Charles was absorbed in grief, and that Henry was about to speak—

"As to you, Henry, I have to trouble you with a very few words:—let not your friend, who, I see, is contending with himself, but whose virtue will triumph in the end,—let him not surpass you.—Emulate him.—Your parents, aged and infirm, are before you.—Your union with Miss Stuart would destroy both, would murder Olivia, and therefore make Caroline far more wretched, than the disappointment of her passion.—Dear—dear son,—child of my heart,—most favoured,—most precious,—save your family! —you know not half the claims, that Olivia has upon you, though you know they
are

are manifold.—I will not, in this moment, disguise that her father has preserved yours, preserved him from unexpected but utter ruin,—from imprisonment! — Behold, your weeping mother is borne down with sorrow, with love, with gratitude:— behold she kneels, kneels to her son:—your father joins her petitions, in a posture no less suppliant:— must we both supplicate in vain?—alas! look upon us, my son!”

The venerable pair were almost suffocated with their sensations.

Charles raised Lady Fitzorton.

Henry lifted his father from the ground into his arms, exclaiming, as he held him in his embrace,—“ Live! live, my father!— let me alone be the sacrifice!—it shall be so!— most willingly will I be the victim.—Do with me as you both see fit!” (here he embraced his mother) “dispose of my hand, my life, to your wish:—I will not murmur. No destiny, no agony, can equal what I at this moment feel at seeing you in such a situation. And yet my friend,—my poor friend—”

Henry left his mother, and ran into the open arms of Charles.

“Take no thought of me!” exclaimed his friend: “I cannot bear to witness, much less to create, a scene like that which yet pierces my soul.—I will banish myself for ever.—My own sword should end me, if I could be the cause of such another, to those who ought to have shut the door which they threw wide open to give me welcome!”

“Sir!—Madam,” continued Charles, “as Olivia knows not yet of my unhappy love, I here swear to you,—although it may, and I hope it will break my heart,—I swear never—never—”

“Charles,” answered Sir Armine,—“I will have you bound only by the sacred ties of your own reason, friendship, and honour:—and thus, from my inmost soul, do I pour out my thanks.”

“In which are included,” said Lady Fitz-orton, “my heart-felt acknowledgments.”

“My house is your own:” cries Sir Armine. “When your visits afflict you, or interrupt the generous task you have im-
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posed on yourself, you shall be free to depart unquestioned; and whenever you return, our smiles shall welcome you.—Neither shall Henry be restrained from the abbey:—We submit him to your protection, to the guard of his own duty, wisdom, and virtue, and to the sacred office for which he will now again prepare his head and heart:—we yield him to the counsels of Caroline Stuart herself, who, from those traits of character and conduct you have at different times related, will, I am sure, when you explain to her more fully *our* situations, help us,—even against herself.

“Another word, and I have done,” added Sir Armine:—“the care with which the fatal mysteries that have entangled us, has been guarded from Olivia and her father, my best benefactor, my *preserver*,—I consider as more than chance,—as providence.—If the peace of innocence be dear, oh! be jealous of dropping a hint that may lead to any discovery of what has past between us this day.—But let us part: we may be surpris’d.—Do not be seen at present,

sent, Henry! and do you, dear Charles, take to your father my best acknowledgments of his letter, to which I will return an early answer:—it shall be such, I pledge myself, as is consistent with the new system of goodwill, I hope mutually sincere, that again subsists between us:—but in the mean-time, I wish you both to peruse this paper, and to give me, when opportunity favours, your joint opinion of it.”

“Hush! I think I heard Olivia’s voice,” said Lady Fitzorton.—“I got her to write some visiting cards for our next week’s annual party, thinking she might be securely employed in that manner, while our conversation, which, I foresaw, would be interesting, lasted:—perhaps she has finished, and is returning.”

“Let us separate,” said Sir Armine, who led Lady Fitzorton out of the room, leaving Charles and Henry again together.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

DEPRIVED for some time of the power of speaking to each other, Henry and Charles could only express by signs, a mutual desire of perusing the paper left in their hands. Henry opened it, and found the obligation mentioned by his father.

It consisted in Mr. Clare's having advanced no less a sum than fifty thousand pounds, to replace the amount of what Sir Armine had lost within the past week, by the failure of a banker whose credit he had generously attempted to save in the hour of an exigence that threatened destruction to himself and a whole family.

To prevent this threatened ruin, Sir Armine, who had been long in friendship with the banker, put himself to the last difficulty, but had scarce effected the accommodation before the banker was declared insolvent; and the news getting air, the person of whom Sir Armine borrowed the money, made

made sudden claim for a return of the sum, which was only borrowed for one and twenty days, to cover sudden losses which the banker had himself sustained. In this extremity Sir Armine confided the case to Mr. Clare, who immediately deposited the money, insisting it should not be considered as any part of Olivia's independent fortune, but what it had been his solemn design, out of his distinct property, to leave to his oldest, dearest friend, in case he should be his survivor, and if not, to be divided equally between his young friends, James and John.

Mr. Clare had farther said, "that as Sir Armine had informed him he had no way of paying off the sum borrowed, but by trenching on those independencies, which, though dutiously surrendered, he knew his old friend considered only as a more solemn trust:—the advance of what he (Mr. Clare) had *willed* to be presented after death, would better be offered now; which, "you know my friend," added Mr. Clare,—"will give me an opportunity of seeing an important

article of my last will and testament performed in my life-time, — besides making Olivia one of the happiest girls in the world; for to tell you the truth, this is one of her plans, after I had thrice refused the offer of her own fortune: but that, I have determined, must come clear to one whom I have long considered as her husband."

Both the young men were greatly affected at this act of generosity on the part of Mr. Clare, and were not so blinded by their passion, as not to feel it was a natural and strong, though not, perhaps, altogether justifiable inducement in Mr. Fitzorton, to promote the match between Henry and Olivia:—for indeed, there is not any degree of family distress, though it may be pleaded as a palliative, can be admitted as a justification.

Following, therefore, the impulse of a similar sensation, they mutually deplored the cruel destiny which did not give them an apparent pretence to censure the event of which they were to be the victims.—On the contrary, they seemed to catch the spirit

spirit of chivalry which characterized the action of the good old Clare; and, warming by degrees, they worked themselves up to such a sense of the conduct they ought to pursue, that each resolved to strengthen the other, to the performance of the promise made to Sir Armine and Lady Fitzorton.

And thus, for a time, in this well-conducted victory over themselves, they forgot that they were still passionate lovers.

Alas! how nature plays with her children! She seems to rank them even amongst her sports.

In the midst of all this heroism, a small circumstance happened, to convince the heroes that theoretical and practical philosophy are somewhat different.

Charles had a glimpse of Olivia, and Henry of Caroline's little spaniel, exactly as they had settled their point of resolution.—The sight of these objects shook the goodly fabric which imagination had reared in their hearts; and, from the pride of victors, they sunk, in a moment, to the condition of

the captive that had only been dreaming he was free.

“Must I resign thee, beautiful Olivia?” sighed Charles:—“must I then relinquish the very hope of thy ever being mine?”

“O thou envied little animal!” exclaimed Henry to the spaniel,—“how wilt thou be fondled by my soul’s dear Caroline, while I—must no more indulge the thought, even that I am beloved!”

Then, as if by sympathy, both the youths embracing, they came to another settled point, namely, that they were a couple of miserable fellows, who had nothing left in the world that took the shape of consolation, but that one was as wretched as the other;—a conclusion, which, though not perhaps strictly generous, has been often thought comfortable, — proceeding, possibly, from a social idea; for few can bear to be happy or sorrowful alone.

Olivia and her canine companion soon joined the young gentlemen.—She was delighted to see them hand in hand, which she considered as the result of their mutual happiness.

pinefs.—Her spaniel, enraptured to behold two of his best friends, leaped alternately upon them, with every demonstration of gratitude and joy, but more especially upon Henry, who, we believe, was, of the two, the greater favourite: and Henry, in turn, received him with undiminished affection, and, indeed, appeared to be, either for his own sake or some other person's, more fond of him than ever.

Olivia, with an air of pleasantry, counterfeiting mortification, declared that “she should now, in reality, be jealous, and would, therefore, the less reluctantly suffer Charles to take her rival back to his mistress: “For,” said she to Charles,—“you see plainly, the little seducer receives Henry's first attentions; and I shall presently be but a secondary object.—To confess the truth,” said Olivia,—“I am a little jealous of you too, Mr. Stuart; for you and your friend, in your last interview with Sir Armine and Lady Fitzorton,—who, by the bye, insidiously kept me out of their party,—have contrived to run away with their
O 5 hearts,

hearts, in a manner that throws poor Olivia and the rest of the family in shadow, quite into the back ground of our domestic groupe.—Nothing now, forsooth! but the praises of the two inseparables, Henry and Charles, has for the last half hour been heard through the castle!—‘They are the best, the noblest young men in the world,’ says the old lady.—‘Excellent youths!’ cries the old gentleman.—‘Why what have you done to deserve all these fine things?—But do not tell me.—I hate secrets.—The knowledge of them would only serve to increase my jealousy; for I suppose I should have the mortification to find you have done every thing to effect the charming reconciliation, which, I find, is to take place between our families; and I have been only the letter-carrier, you the ambassadors!—And you are to know, I am of so perverse a disposition, that I quarrel with the happiness of my best friends, unless I have been some way, aye, and *importantly*, the medium.”

The friends consulted each other’s looks.

“Yes,

“Yes, you may plot, and lay your wife heads together, against a poor feeble woman,” resumed Olivia:—“but I will have my revenge yet, and with interest too;—for, when we are all again as we should be, I am determined there shall not happen a single thought or word that shall make any one of us wish to part again, except under the assurance of a speedy return to each other, for the rest of our lives.—So, that being the case, I shall now go to your father and mother, whom I left in the garden, Mr. Henry,—and see if I can get back *some* of my stolen goods—a little bit of their hearts again.

“Meantime,” added she, as she was quitting the apartment,—“do not forget, Mr. Stuart, to tell your sister, that if she be but half as happy as I am at the prospect of our amicable association, she will be *almost* as blessed as I wish her to be;—not that I should be quite contented till she was as happy as myself either.—As to you, little Mr. Fitz,—but you know my mind already, and so this parting cares, and adieu, sir.”

Little is that reader skilled in the history of the human heart, who cannot suggest to himself the additional dilemma into which the two friends were thrown by this animated harangue.

When Olivia had departed, Henry caught hold of little Fitz, and turning to his friend, observed, "From the bottom of my soul, my unhappy Charles, I regret that you and I ever came into the world!"

"Would to heaven, we were both out of it, my dear Henry!" answered Charles.

"If we were both dead, all would be very well," said Henry.

"You are perfectly in the right," answered Charles.

Henry seemed solemnly to recur to a suspended idea. The expressions were trite, and, if considered as the language of despairing lovers, are ludicrous and unmeaning:—but, on the part of Henry, they betrayed the image that was but too deeply rooted in his mind.

The lieutenant, after a mournful pause, observed that, "as, either way, they must be

be both miserable, it would be better for only two persons to suffer, than to increase the number of victims." Hereupon Henry, who had been holding the silken ears of Caroline's spaniel to his cheek, and wiping away the tears which had dropt upon them, very gravely demanded of Charles, "What was his opinion of suicide?"

"To speak of it professionally, I think it the worst sort of desertion, and flying one's country," answered Charles.—"To speak of it morally, I feel it to be sinful:—in sorrow, as in joy, such have ever been my sentiments.—I wish we were both in our graves, my friend, with all my soul: but I do not hold it right to gratify this wish by shortening our lives. Death would be a blessing: but could it be purchased by an action accursed?"

Henry gave a sort of dissentient shake of the head, but dropt the subject.

"I can endure this house no longer at present," said Charles,—“and will therefore go home,—but without any hope of greater happiness when I get there.”

“I will attend you—part—of—the way,” says Henry, stammeringly dividing his sentence.

They went out, and little Fitz was still in the arms of Henry. Scarce had they reached the park, when Charles asked, “Whether the family would not think it somewhat rude to go without his taking leave?—Very ill bred, certainly! do not you think so, my dear Henry?”—and he was walking again towards the house, without waiting for Henry’s reply. Then, as if changing his mind, he turned and took the path to the abbey, saying, with a dejected voice, “it was not material.”

They now walked arm in arm, and little Fitz, being set down, ranged the hedges, and traversed the grounds,—far the happiest being of the trio.

They soon gained the never-to-be-forgotten grand avenue, from which the abbey and the castle could be viewed distinctly in all their parts.—It would be no easy matter to decide, whether Henry gazed more earnestly at the one, or Charles at the other.

other. They both stood fixed, midway betwixt both edifices, employing themselves with the view of objects in the most opposite directions; and, after feeding their separate unhappiness by all those tender thoughts which they had resolved, but a few minutes before, to consider as the forbidden fruit of their heart, and therefore never to be tasted.

Charles declared, "That this nursing an unfortunate passion was extremely wrong; and, if they were wise, they were now taking their last look of the devoted castle, and the ill-fated abbey."

"Very true," said Henry:—"here then let us—yes—after we have taken another look, let us separate—at least for the present.—No,"—added he,—“I will go with you, my friend, just as far as those trees on the left—for there—and then—and then—”

"Yes," observed Charles, gazing.

"True, my friend, and — th — the — then —"

Henry absolutely fluttered, and was dragging at the arm of Charles, as he spoke;—

*

Charles,

Charles, in the same degree, hanging back, as the other pressed forwards. Just as this see-saw situation ended, Charles recollected he had left his stick at the castle, but protested, "He would not lose it for the world. It was a gift."—One of his gloves too was missing.—This, indeed, he had, the instant before, taken off and put into his pocket.—So he strode back some paces, pulling his friend, whose turn it now was to linger behind.—"They will be taken care of," said Henry.—"You will walk over again soon, you know, or—or—or *I* can bring—bring—bring them—myself—to the ab—ab—abbey."

"*I* walk over again to the castle!—*you* bring them to the abbey!—Alas! my friend, have you so soon forgot our solemn resolutions?—Exert yourself," cried Charles,—"bravely.—What a noble pile is Fitzorton Castle, my friend!"

"The abbey, methinks, is a more attractive object:—such grandeur, so many awful charms—so many—only look at it as the sun falls on the western turrets:—a long
and

and eternal adieu, thou sacred mansion! farewel, for ever!"

Henry walked towards it with hasty strides, all the while he was speaking.—
"Yes! Adieu! thou venerable edifice, whose very ruins are dear to my soul!—and ye, O conscious woods, who have often witnessed my sighs and tears — my fervent vows, and bitter execrations, against persecuting fortune.—But chiefly thou, Oh heart-enshrined bower!"

Henry quickened his steps, till he almost ran.

"Thou receivedst my first trembling declarations of a passion that has not hitherto, for one moment," continued he, — "and *shall* never quit, my troubled breast!—and thou, oh well-remembered tree, whose tender bark is still, I trust, faithful to those names, which, alas! must never, never be united!"—

The spirits of passion and of poesy were now at work; and Henry, desirous that his feet and tongue should keep pace with each other, had got to the side of the very tree
of

of which he had been so pathetically taking an everlasting leave;—when happening—then for the first time since his soliloquy began—to recollect his friend, he turned round, and saw that no less distracted lover going, as fast as his legs could carry him, in the contrary direction, towards the castle, to bid as affectionate and as eternal an adieu to its appreciated objects.

Henry exalted his voice, and assured his friend “he was going the wrong way:”—which Charles retorted upon Henry,—and thus they stood for a considerable time, hallooing and beckoning to each other, each steady to follow that part of the compass to which his own affections pointed.

Alas! the abbey and castle were as the opposite poles, — Henry and his friend, the attracted needles.

CHAPTER XXXV.

WHILE they were vibrating to their different points, little Fitz, whom fate seems to have intended as the small but important

important instrument of many a great event in this history, was heard to give tongue, and chase a hare, which he had started, at full cry, till all the woods of Stuart were made vocal with his music.—The animal took up the great avenue, and seeing the unequal enemy she had to contend with, rather played with her slender legs, than put them on the stretch, keeping only at a safe distance before the panting little Fitz, as if she intended to afford him diversion.

Henry, taken by surprise, though not a great admirer of the chase, now followed the sport, and by turning towards the same side of the hedge with the hare, whenever she deviated from the track that led immediately to the abbey, seemed to wish she would keep the straight road; while Charles, who came slowly after, perhaps would have been better pleased had she taken her course towards the castle.

It was, however, decreed that the abbey should now be the asylum for the poor hare; and, having reached the gate of entrance, she sprung through a well-known
meuse,

meuse, formed among some bushes that clustered at the bottom of the avenue; and, notwithstanding the utmost efforts of little Fitz, was soon lost in the windings of the forest.

The hue and cry of the spaniel, however, and of Henry, who, though on very different motives, was not less vociferous, had not only brought forth into the front garden that faced the grand avenue, several other four-footed lovers of the sport, who swelled the thunder of the woods, at they knew not what, but alarmed Sir Guise, honest Dennison, and lastly Caroline herself, who all ran to the iron railing to see what was the matter.

Henry, who was, very conveniently for his embarrassment, out of breath from his pursuit, explained the circumstance, and was relating the heroic achievements of little Fitz,—accounting, at the same time, to Caroline for his delay, when the courageous animal came panting into the garden, where, hardly finding breath to express his transports at being restored to his

his mistress, he threw himself on his side upon one of the grass plats, and, still the most happy of the groupe, recovered his strength and spirits at leisure.

Presently after, arrived the tardy Charles; and, when Dennison had consulted the countenances of the whole company, and seeing nothing there either particularly to delight or to distress him, he patted little Fitz on the head, telling him, "Puss had led him a fine dance, and, like many other fine folks, had made a fool of him at last:" and with this pithy remark the good old man withdrew!

There never perhaps was exhibited in any four faces more characteristic impatience, than in those of the party then present,—Henry and Charles, to disguise their secret emotions,—Sir Guise and Caroline to discover them.

This threw them all into very awkward situations.—Caroline, from certain clouds not unattended with showers, that gathered and fell involuntarily on the features of Henry, was afraid to ask any questions:
and

and Charles, whispering her not to be inquisitive, observed that "Ill tidings always arrived too soon," augmented her distress.

At length Sir Guise, counterfeiting a generous anxiety to know the result of his advances to reconciliation, and expatiating on the ardent desire he felt to complete the good work he had begun, insisted upon his son's telling him, "How his overtures had been received?"

Charles made shift to acquaint him with the truth, so far as his father was concerned;—he said that "Sir Armine received them with proper kindness, and would be as ready to conciliate as Sir Guise."

Henry, finding that his friend got through this garbled relation but very lamely, offered him a helping hand, by taking up the narrative, and carrying it on, so far as had any relation to Olivia's amicable message to Caroline.—But Henry was not more successful than his friend: for, though he likewise indulged pretty copiously in mental reservations, the difficulty which he found
to

to separate what was unfit for communication, from what might safely be divulged, rendered the whole story so dismembered and incongruous, that a far less discerning spectator, than either the baronet or his daughter, might easily conceive there was a great deal more hid than there had been discovered.

Sir Guise, therefore, choosing to interpret their confusion to a dislike of relating all that had past, thought fit to act the part of the man of violated feelings and nice honour, and to exclaim, "Very well, I see how it is!—I have been insulted.—My foolish good-nature has been rejected.—I might have expected as much, indeed!—But you would over-rule me.—You know your influence, and see the consequence of it!—However, thank heaven, I have the consolation to suffer this fresh outrage for my children's sake; and so I submit.—But, methinks, when I condescended to make the first advances towards the Castle, your father, young gentleman, should not have driven

driven me back to the Abbey with disgrace, or have himself retreated.

Henry was about to reply, and with some generous warmth, in defence of his father,—from a tender love of whom, no sufferings of his own, though proceeding from that father, could detach him;—when Charles, who was a young man of high honour and exalted principles, felt it an incumbent duty to take the justification of Sir Armine upon himself. “Sir,” said he, “the overtures you offered, were, as I before observed, received with suitable kindness: and I am convinced your visit will be returned with a confirmation of the most hospitable assurances—but—”

“But what?” questioned Sir Guise.

Henry, who presaged some possible good from concealing, and much positive mischief from divulging, all that might naturally be supposed to follow, observed, in an abrupt manner, that “nothing had passed between his father and friend any way inconsistent with—that is—as to that—he only meant—he could

could assure Sir Guise, as to what had past, —nothing material relative thereto, he could take on himself to say,—in regard to the circumstances which—”

“Mr. Fitzorton,” interposed the baronet, “your attempts to explain away the repulse I have met with from your family, are as generous as they are unsatisfactory ; there is at the bottom of all this a something—”

Caroline interrupted the farther discussion of this matter, by declaring she was suddenly seized with so dreadful a giddiness, that if she did not hurry into the house she should certainly tumble. Indeed, her whole appearance but too clearly confirmed the description of her situation: she was with difficulty conducted to the abbey, under the supports of Henry and Charles,—the former pressing her to his heart and whispering a thousand tenderneſſes in her ear as they passed along, to the total oblivion of every thing on earth but Caroline’s anxiety ; and her brother scarce less affectionately tried to recover his sister’s ſpirits ; for he now plainly ſaw that her diſorder originated in the ap-

prehensions of her mind, as to what had past at the castle.

Sir Guise Stuart, not being quite so much interested in or affected by these kind of disasters, took a turn or two round the garden, where we shall leave him to the only person he did really interest himself for—to himself.

His afflicted daughter now, in a voice of woe and terror, called upon Henry and her brother to unfold the dreadful mystery which lay hid behind, or was partly seen struggling in, their expressions. “What new grief has befallen us?” said she: “it cannot surpass what my despair suggests; and I conjure you, both by friendship, love, duty, and all that is dear to us, reveal the whole! I know not wherefore I am thus affected; but I feel as if something more terrible than any thing I have yet endured was about to involve us all!”

“No!” said Henry, dropping suddenly on his knee, “No, Caroline! neither father, nor fate itself,—I here solemnly swear—”

“Whatever be the nature of your oath, it must

must not be made," replied Caroline: "nor could I hear it now;—for so great, alas! is my present weakness, that—O my father, why, when I had yielded myself up to the cold mandates of despair,—why did you revive my hopes?—or how, knowing, as I did, the many insurmountable evils which environ all of us,—ah! how could I be so frantic—so—"

While she was proceeding in this apostrophe, the venerable Dennison made his appearance, bearing two letters, one of which he delivered to Caroline, the other he laid upon the table, saying, "it was for Sir Guise."

The baronet himself came in immediately after: and Charles desiring Dennison to leave the room, the rest of the party, before assembled in the garden, were now grouped in the great hall, where Caroline, it being the first apartment, had rested.

Although her strength appeared, in the moment before, to have left her, she rallied sufficiently, to break the seal of the above-mentioned letter, and was just about to read

the contents, when Sir Guise, having with no less curiosity opened that which had been directed to himself, read aloud what follows,—premisng, “that it came from the castle, and appeared to be written by Sir Armine Fitzorton.”

Human attention, or expectation, never perhaps having been more fixed, than during the perusal of this epistle, we will assign it a distinct place.

CHAPTER. XXXVI.

“**SIR ARMINE FITZORTON** and family receive Sir Guise Stuart’s advances to reconciliation, with all the attention due to them: and although some domestic concerns prevented an immediate reply in writing, proper acknowledgments were dispatched by our friend Charles, whose many virtues we all hold in high regard: and Sir Armine, for himself and his family, in which he includes by authority that of the Clares, now assures

Sir Guise, his welcome to the castle shall be no less cordial than they expect to find at the abbey; and that the first visit shall be left to his own nomination, as soon as he pleases, after an event, arranging between the families of Fitzorton and Clare, has taken place; which it is now expected to do in the course of a few days."

The consternation of Henry and Charles, while the baronet read this card, could be surpassed only by that which, like a hurricane, shook the frame of Caroline. On hearing the last passage, she dropt the paper, which had long trembled in her hand, upon the floor, and sinking herself after it, cried out in a feeble yet agonized and interrupted voice, "In—a—few—a—a—very—few days!"

Henry's eye caught the superscription of the card which was addressed to Caroline, and perceived the hand writing of Olivia. He would, hereupon, have glided it into his pocket, to prevent at least farther mischief. But Sir Guise, with a solicitude truly characteristic of *his* paternal feelings—wounded, no doubt, at seeing his now beloved daugh-

ter in such profound affliction, observed, that, "as it was possible the contents of the second might serve as an antidote to the poison of the first paper, he must gently insist on reading it."

Henry stood by Caroline's side, hovering between sense and insanity:—Charles was in a kind of stupor, perhaps, at that time, friendly to his reason; and Caroline seemed to shudder betwixt life and death.

"TO MISS STUART.

"THE customs of the world require that I should begin and end my introductory letter with certain prescriptive formalities; but, in the first place, can I consider Caroline Stuart as a stranger, when, even in our almost infant days, I bore to her a sister's love, and have since been intimately acquainted with her virtues, and as long have loved and honoured her for them? And indeed I am so little an observer of etiquette, where my affections are concerned, that I should put the greatest restraint imaginable on those affections, were I to clog them with
common

common ceremonies, in this address which is simply to describe the happiness I feel in the long-wished and long-sought opportunity of making it consistently at once with my duty and love."

Sir Guise paused.

"I told you," said Sir Guise, "the young lady would atone amply for the old gentleman :—so let us go on."

"The prospect of our family re-union, in which Caroline and Olivia,—pardon my boast,—shall be as sisters, Henry and Charles as brothers, and our parents scarcely distinguishable from each other, is so delightful to me, and is, indeed, a transport which has been so long watched, wished, and prayed for, that you must pardon me if I forget, not only the modes of the world, but the world itself, in the sensibility with which I reflect upon the completion of those wishes and prayers. Almost in the instant of their being granted to me—"

"Dear Sir Guise," said Henry, "it is cruel to proceed, when you see how your daughter, and indeed all of us are afflicted."

"Afflicted!" reiterated the baronet: "surely there has nothing of an afflictive kind yet occurred; and I therefore augur well of the rest."

"I entreat," said Caroline, — "that my father may be permitted to proceed."

Charles was silent.

Sir Guise read on, "I catch up the pen to inform my long-loved Caroline of my happiness, not only because I could not suffer the coldness of delay to hang on such heartfelt tidings, but because I cherish the hope that my felicity will be shared by Miss Stuart."

"Felicity!" exclaimed Caroline.

Henry, who had taken advantage of this pause, having cast his eye over the residue of Olivia's epistle, which the baronet held carelessly down that he might the better observe on the parties, took hold of the paper, and cried, "excuse me, sir! — we have heard too much already: — what remains, I see, is of no consequence. So, if you please, we will —"

"If

"If you please, Mr. Fitzorton," answered Sir Guise, pretending offence, "we will go through the rest, and form our own judgment of its consequence."

Charles and his sister seemed to anticipate the sentiments that were to follow, in Henry's countenance; which was at all times an expressive one, and might now be said in Shakespeare's language, "to be a book, in which one might read strange matters." From their perusal of this, they prepared themselves for something miserable.

The baronet asserted that, hitherto, he saw nothing but what was in good train, and proceeded thus:

"I must inform my dear Caroline—that—that—I protest I hardly know how to write it—that—after a life of wooing—a certain event is likely to take place between one of *my* family—and—and one of—but, I understand, Henry accompanied his friend home; and as I suppose him to be still at the abbey, I refer you to *him* for the particulars;—or if *he* refuses, your brother may be applied to."

If the reader's own mind furnishes not a sketch of the situation of the trio most concerned in this intelligence, and especially the reference to Henry and Charles, we must fairly confess the inability of our pen to describe it.

Sir Guise, having insidiously made unobserved observations, read on—

“I only mention the circumstance, as a tender thought, at the moment of my writing, steals into my heart, purporting the honour and happiness I should derive, had I the privileges of a friend to invite the gentle Caroline's service on an occasion which—in short, as I said before, not being able to consider her in any other light than an old—an intimate—a bosom friend—I—I——”

Sir Guise, masking a cruel purpose in kind expressions, declared that “he feared, what followed was coming rather too closely to the point.—However,” added the baronet, “it is but another sentence; the sooner an unpleasant thing was over, the better.—Suspense was the forest of evils; and he
would

would therefore get rid of the remainder as fast as possible." He then appeared to hurry over what follows :

"I feel a degree of anxiety, for which I cannot account, that the, I hope and trust, in heaven, most joyful day of my life, even though I thus tremble at its approach, should be distinguished by two of the greatest blessings—the acquisition of a—how shall I name it—of a tender husband!—I can scarcely write—and the recovery of my earliest friend :—and this double felicity I am ambitious to mark by the latter undertaking the gentlest, the most endearing office of friendship. Ah ! cannot my Caroline conjecture what the tumult of my soul permits me not to—"

"She wishes you to be one of her bridesmaids, I suppose," said Sir Guise, affecting a bluntness, for which, almost in the commission of it, he pretended to reproach himself.

"Her bridesmaid !" ejaculated the trio at the same time :—"her bridesmaid !"

“That, indeed, is too much!” said Sir Guise, affecting to sympathise.

“Damnation!” exclaimed Charles, rising and stamping as he walked toward the door, —then turned, and taking Henry by the hand,—“yet, God bless you together! It must be so. It ought—and I submit—I—I—I—do.—My friend, farewell.”

Caroline attempted to follow her brother’s example; but, catching his arm as he was going, she could only say—“I—too—reign myself—and—and—from my soul—repeat the benediction!” She withdrew, supported by Charles.

“My dear Henry,” said Sir Guise, almost betraying his triumph in the attempt to refine upon it, “you perceive I have done my utmost—I have fought, petitioned, and almost prostrated, myself,—but all in vain: my children and myself remain unhappy, and yet, in this instance, none of us perhaps can blame any of your family.”

The baronet paused, seeing Henry start from his seat, seize his hair in desperation, and

and then striking his breast as he ejaculated, "No! my worthy friend, it is not you nor any body else:—it is the work of my own cursed, cursed fortune!"

A servant entered, saying to Sir Guise, "the gentleman you expected, sir, is come."—"I will attend him immediately," observed the baronet: then adverting to Henry,—“I am really concerned to see you so much affected, Mr. Fitzorton. I have only to regret that my paternal efforts have not answered the end proposed: and as some very particular business claims me elsewhere, I must bid you farewell: but we shall meet: yes, we shall certainly meet.—The abbey is still open, you know; and though my good offices have failed, my best wishes are yours.”

CHAPTER XXXVII.

HENRY was now again left to his soliloquies in that house where it seemed fated for him to meet varieties of distress, disappointment, and despair.—He found himself

himself more forely beset than ever:—his grand discovery had been made to some of the parties who were principally concerned in it;—and he had the mortification to perceive, his secret might have been better still confined to his own bosom.—At the castle, his father, mother, and brother James, were made partakers of it: letters had been sent on the subject to John:—at the abbey it had been communicated to Sir Guise and Caroline, with equal ill fortune.—Olivia and her father only had escaped: and were the knowledge of his involvement even to extend to them, it was plain to be seen, that, although the secret would then have taken its full range, like the flight of an empoisoned arrow, it would have lost nothing by its passage though the air, but scatter desolation in its progress.

Under this conviction, Henry once again left the abbey, staring wildly at Dennison, who once more opened the door to him in an extreme of his misery,—and in a state betwixt sense and distraction.

As the reader has several times accompanied

nied the ill-starred Henry in his gloomy walks to and from these mansions, we will not now press his attendance : but while Henry is on his way, we shall enter that apartment in the abbey, where the person who, it has been noticed, came to wait upon Sir Guise Stuart, was conducted, and whither Sir Guise was now gone to give him audience.

But, previously to our joining them, it may be right to take a short retrospective view of the points which the worthy baronet had gained, since his antipathy to the house of Fitzorton, and his no less radical aversion to his daughter, had arrived at their height, and since, for certain purposes yet in the womb of time, he had assumed the mask of affection and good-will.

From the date of this memorable æra when his hate admitted not of augmentation, the said mask of kindness had continued to thicken, till not only the innocent victims thereof, Charles, Caroline, Dennison, Henry, and the rest, were deceived by it,—but even the principal agent in his own designs

designs was enabled to penetrate the darkness of its folds.

By this resolute and patient hypocrisy, he had, without any personal hazard, the only point which his fell nature felt as a check, effected, in a degree, what was absolutely necessary to his safety in the perpetration of some nobler works of wickedness. He had, by his pretended reform, taken off the bitter edge of that detestation in which he was held by every creature of his own household.—He had contrived to shift from his own shoulders the weight of whatever consequences might result from those hapless loves, which his cold heart had assured him would, at least he was determined to take care they should, be more sickly under his chilling influence, than if he any longer appeared to oppose them: and his seeming to shine upon them was but like the transient gleam of the dog-star, that darts upon flowers after an untimely blight had lodged the worm within their bud.—He knew, indeed, that even if Henry and his daughter should come together, as one consequence of his
affected

affected reconciliation, the union itself might be made subservient to his purpose of final revenge, not only in working the woe of both the husband and wife, but of every individual of the two detested houses of Clare and Fitzorton, and principally by the disappointment of their views in the disposal of Olivia, the whole scope of which he had been made acquainted with before the partial discoveries of Caroline or Henry, although we have not yet thought proper to communicate his sources of intelligence to the reader.

But, in fact, he did not seriously believe his advance to good fellowship would produce a match between his daughter and Henry, and only provided for it in his own prolific mind; as a possible contingency. He rather anticipated what really happened, that either the folly of the lovers themselves, or his own contrivance, would but the more destroy their hopes, the more they were made known;—and *that*, independent on the satisfaction which their vexation would give him, for the sincere hate he bore them,

them, he should derive from the appearance of having annihilated all his own resentments, the more solid happiness he expected from entrapping the credulity of the Fitzortons.

We must not omit the mention of another, and that not the least important point acquired by his thus “seeming the thing he was not,” viz. the measure of odium he hereby took from himself in the opinion of his neighbours, who heard of his great change of conduct, not only from the servants, who had before reprobated his behaviour, but from the parties who were the objects of this extraordinary alteration.

The people of the parish, indeed, interpreted this extraordinary change into a miracle: but the good monk, who was now one of the most zealous of his advocates, assured them it was the simple operation of conscience, which it had pleased God to awake in his heart, in time not only to make atonement to all whom he had injured in this present world, but effect his future salvation in the world to come.

To

To say the truth, the baronet had been at more than usual pains to observe a consistent conduct in the presence of our monastic, who, though a man of great simplicity, and devoid of the suspicion, which those who are themselves guilty cultivate most, was likewise of a very penetrating mind.—Yet, the uniform discretion of Sir Guise was more than a match for the doctor's clearness of head or purity of heart,—inasmuch that the best, warmest, and most able, as well as most active defender of the baronet, far and near, at home and abroad, was now Father Arthur.

It is hence apparent, that Sir Guise, in a very short space of time, but with a diligence suitable to so great an object, might be said to have done what is justly to be considered amongst the most arduous of all human labours,—to have redeemed a lost character, even when, indeed, it was supposed to be gone, *past* redemption.—It was still remembered by many how bad he had been; but it was generally believed he had, though late, seen his errors,
and

and that if he was now sometimes as outrageous in doing worthy, as before he had been violent in committing wicked actions, it should be imputed to him as an over-anxious desire to make up lost time, and to finish his own career of virtue by labouring doubly in the vineyard, that he might work out the salvation which had been so long neglected. Upon the whole, therefore, few persons enjoyed a fairer regenerated fame, since the death of his lady, as a good father, a good neighbour, or a sincere penitent, than Sir Guise Stuart.

Perhaps, Sir Armine and John Fitzorton, and one or two more, might still have their suspicions;—yet there was only one man living, who, at the moment here alluded to, could bear witness that he was much *more* consummate in the ways of deceit than he had ever been before;—and this single living person was HIMSELF.

It was even doubted by the person who now came to discourse with him, and to whom we shall immediately introduce the reader.

This

This person was no other than the notorious Mr. Valentine Miles, the active agent of Sir Guise upon all occasions:—he collected his rents and improved his estates, he got in his monies, and laid them out to what he thought the best, that is to say, his own advantage.—He was no less the parasite than the tyrant of Sir Guise.—To him the baronet was first indebted for the honour of Mrs. Tempest's acquaintance; and like other providers of his cast of character, he was shrewdly suspected to have first tasted the dainty himself: yet at other times, jack-all as he was, he knew the art to make the lion crouch at his feet, and tremble before him.—The above-mentioned lady numbered this gentleman amongst her first impressions, although we hardly know how to call him or any other person her first love, because there were, about the same period, so many candidates for her favour, and from a peculiar philanthropy she was so little disposed to that species of cruelty whereby lovers are said so often to suffer wounds and death, that it would be narrowing her kind and
relent-

relenting nature, to confine her loving kindness to any individual.—Mr. Miles was certainly one of her happy men:—and Mr. Tempest, whom she honoured with her hand, was another; but somehow, the latter soon died, and the former had at least one rival less.—Indeed, Miles continued amongst her first favourites after the lady's heart got more into practice, and even when her love of mankind, increasing with the knowledge of suffering objects, and her pity for their sufferings, was unbounded.—But then her Valentine recommended himself by more than one congenial passion,—that of gaming.—The love of the dice was paramount over all. Indeed it nearly extinguished every other, or rather it was, in process of time, so much the master passion, that every other was in vassalage to it:—love itself, great, enlarged, and impartial as it was in the ample heart of this generous pair, became subservient to it:—for the lady imagined her mighty flame might be fed by once more lighting at it the torch of Hymen. A dice-box, in such a hand, seemed to have all the magic power of that torch; and

as

as Sir Guise Stuart raised his admiring eye to the enchantress, the dice themselves were as two balls of electric fire; and a thousand sparks and gentle shocks were drawn from his heart. In love affairs, Miles was nothing selfish.—He secretly saw this conquest, and interrupted it not:—on the contrary, he had long called the object of it his bosom friend; and Sir Guise became another happy man, and entered into the gaming association with a spirit like that of his friend and mistress: and, although the aforesaid hymeneal torch had not yet lighted our baron a second time to the altar, it was only consigned to Cupid as a little deity in waiting for a more convenient season.

Meantime, the loves and games of Valentine and Mrs. Tempest went gaily on:—what though she had no nuptial torch for him? she had a Cupid still very much at his service; and that did full as well.—And as to the gambling affection, they might both be said to be “pleased with ruin;” for they had very often been ruined together on the same evening, yet retired in the most benevolent

volent humour, on the social principle of making each other happy;—they had, indeed, often been made whole again the next morning, by their *chosen* friend, Sir Guise Stuart, who was altogether unskilful, but whom the lady by the pretences of violent love, and the gentleman by those of as vehement friendship, contrived to pilage of what ought to have been appropriated to his own family:—for, whatever praise is due to profusion, when he had money in his purse, Sir Guise might claim wherever his pleasures or fears were concerned.—His temper was sufficiently niggard indeed: but he was coaxed or terrified out of enormous sums, because, in truth, except by the starts of a moment, which he always paid for, he dared not refuse;—his own miserable soul was a reservoir; but Miles and Mrs. Tempest were the impure streams that exhausted, and literally, *played* it off.

Yet so radical was this vice of gaming in the widow and Miles, that sometimes, after a run of good fortune had sent them home,—for they were generally under the same roof,
—laden

—laden with spoils, they would pass an hour before they went to bed in playing against each other, and that with the same desire to cheat and win, as if they were at work upon some marked novice, upon whom they had a design:—and whichever, in this tête-à-tête game, came off loser, was to undertake the *odd trick*,—in other words, it was the loser's part to wheedle the baronet out of the next supply.

A slight specimen of the abilities of Mr. Miles was exhibited to the reader in the cheat he attempted to pass upon the family of the Atwoods, after he had favoured the plan for Jenny's journey to London.—But since the discovery of his treachery, he had lived wholly with the baronet's mistress as an *ami de maison*, and had been the confidential medium betwixt that lady and Sir Guise, in certain important points that are now to be communicated.

The most material of these, on the part of the lady, was to make good her ground at the abbey, with a view, as has been intimated, to her becoming no less than lady

of the manor. And the death of lady Matilda gave an unexpected opening to her bold aspiring.

To accomplish this, however, was an undertaking that called for very extraordinary powers: and although those of which Mrs. Tempest was in possession, were certainly of this extraordinary kind, they were yet insufficient to bring about so great an event, without some congenial assistance.

For this, she applied to a man whose talents she had employed in various instances, with unvarying success.—Indeed, there was not any one amongst her acquaintance,—unless she could have brought Sir Guise into a plot against himself, which indeed she did in many instances,—so able, or for the rewards so willing, as her Valentine, to advance a project which he had some time suspected was going on in the mind of his beloved.

Miles was blest with a head and heart so strictly in alliance with each other, that, like copartners, they carried on business in the utmost harmony.—They had, indeed, embarked

embarked in the same trade, that of devising and carrying into effect all sorts of commodities which promoted the *meum*, without considering the *tuum* of this life, so early that they were now become, from long habit and constant practice, equal to any human undertaking that ever hath, or may be done in roguery.—And, to complete the allusion, it might be said, that the best established warehouse of all kinds of knavery, ready made for every possible purpose, was under the firm of Mr. Valentine Miles.

This gentleman was of a good figure and genteel address, and had indeed, in his youth, been a distinguished favourite of the ladies.—He was now only in the maturity of life, somewhat inclined to a corpulence not strictly consistent with elegance, but in perfect unison with our ideas of confirmed manhood.—He was of an assured air, confident expression, ready utterance, versatile talents, and accommodating manners;—and from an uncommonly well-knit construction of limbs, and great natural strength of body, with a certain constitutional power

of drinking others out of their wits while he retained his own, he had run his career in almost every species of debauchery, without being checked by one distemper, or punished by any pains of body; and as to those of mind, he set them gloriously at defiance.—He had, in short, arrived at that pre-eminence, at that perfect imperfection, which annihilates the sense of fear or of shame, and herein was confessedly the superior, even of Sir Guise Stuart, who had an abundance of the former, though he possessed not a jot of the latter.

Upon all these grounds, he was the fittest for a connection with the baronet, of any man in the world: for, as there was not an infamous thought which the heart of man could conceive, but was engendered by Sir Guise, so was there not any man who had so much intrepidity of practical baseness to carry such conception into action, as Miles.

This accomplished gentleman, therefore, and Mrs. Tempest, divided the baronet between them, and had been for some time contriving how to dispose in a more legal manner

manner of his family and fortune to their wishes: for as the widow had, after founding him, avowed her design to Miles, of becoming lady Stuart,—so had Miles, in return of confidence, then first mentioned a long-cherished intention of making proposals to the baronet, for getting rid of the incumbrance of his daughter Caroline.

Now his was a kind of underplot, to be woven into their domestic plan, in order to strengthen their interests.—This little episode, indeed, rather endeared the expected catastrophe to Mr. Miles, who, at the fall of the curtain, promised himself from this double marriage, which might indeed be called the title of the farce, *more* than double advantage;—while Mrs. Tempest was reconciled to it, on principles of equal convenience and accommodation, differing only a little in the idea as to Caroline.—She did not love Miles well enough, to feel any jealousy about the division of his personal favours: but she indulged the secret thought, that she should come in not only for an equal division of Caroline's fortune,—Miles

having promised her a moiety in case the match should be brought about,—but for the sole and sovereign authority over the estates of Sir Guise Stuart; meditating, indeed, to hold these so much at controul, that neither her Sir Guise nor her Valentine should have a greater proportion than their good behaviour to her seemed to merit from her bounty.—As to the baronet's person, her discovery of his infidelity with Jane Atwood was the finishing stroke to the remains of what she was pleased to call love:—she held it more cheap than that of Miles; but not being over nice in her sensations, she foresaw the possibility of still retaining both in the voluminous list of her happy men.

In regard to the nature of Valentine's attachment to Caroline, it as little partook of the troublesome and avaricious tenderness which confines the great passion of love to one person, as that which Mrs. Tempest bore either to her intended husband, or to her old protector: for though Mrs. Tempest was a woman of some violence, in all respects, she professed sovereign scorn of
those

those who affected to argue against pluralities in the *belle passion*: and though she declared she doated on Miles to distraction, it was thought various others were her doating pieces also: and a domestic of her father's had distracted her in the same manner so effectually some months before, that the outward and visible signs of it were obvious even when her elopement from her family was determined on, and the arms of the accommodating Valentine were open to receive her with all incumbrances. It was a long-balanced point on her part, whether she should stay with Mr. Thomas the footman, or run away with Mr. Valentine Miles, her papa's engrossing clerk; for at that time her father was an attorney, and Miles was his assistant. A compromise, however, took place between all parties. Mr. Thomas had a parting *douceur*, and a promise of future provision; and Mr. Miles agreed to the arrangement, in all its parts, and so carried off the lady; but, whether they did, or did not, provide for

Mr. Thomas, cannot at this moment be made known.

Miles had often seen Miss Stuart both in her mother's life-time, and since her death, but had never intimated his passion, otherwise than by certain sighs and smiles, moral sentences, and well-turned compliments, from time to time, which, partly his subordinate situation in life as her father's agent, and partly her own pre-occupied sentiments, had prevented Caroline from seeing, in the least degree, the drift of. He intended, indeed, at first only to seduce her : but he now entertained honourable sentiments, as the most profitable. In regard to the former objection to him, Miles considered it, on reflection, now done away by his profession, as he always maintained, before those who were disposed to question his titles, that a gambler was *a gentleman*, seeing it mixed him constantly in the very best company : and if ever the baronet disputed the claim, Miles would rise up in great displeasure, use some terrifying menace, and insist either on receiving

ceiving a suitable apology, or the satisfaction due to a *gentleman*.

Of late, indeed, some pretty smart contests, about division of spoil, had past between Miles and the widow: their affection for each other was almost worn out; and yet their ties of interest were so strong, that fear operated now, as love had done before, to keep them together; for each well knew, a very little treachery on either side—as is the case with most rogues who confederate,—would destroy both.

Believing that the reader is by this time as perfectly acquainted with these great personages, as it is necessary for him to be, to the right understanding the events which chain our history,—we shall proceed to unfold the business which brought Mr. Miles to the abbey. But as what past between the worthy agent and his illustrious employer, will be, in part, best given in dialogue, we shall, as being indeed fit company only for each other, give them a chapter to themselves.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MILES.

WHAT am I to believe, my dear friend? Is it true that you have offered your daughter in marriage to the son of your direst foe? Is it fear, or is it madness, that induced you to this step? Whatever was the motive, it was carrying the point too far: it was passing my prescribed line of policy, and giving an advantage, which—

SIR GUISE, (*with conscious pride*).

Ha, ha, ha! and have I deceived the deceptive Valentine Miles? Then is my art triumphant indeed!

MILES.

Not so triumphant as you may suppose, sir. You are the dupe of your own artifice: and if especial care be not taken, you will yourself fall into the trap you have set for others.

SIR GUISE.

I understand you not.

MILES.

MILES.

Our trusty emissary brings certain intelligence that your enemies at the castle, with the tremendous John at their head, design to take advantage of this your pacific disposition,—and, breaking the truce when you least suspect it, cut you off at once.

SIR GUISE, (*in consternation*).

Cut me off! murderous villains!

MILES.

But we are, I hope, yet in time, to circumvent them.

SIR GUISE (*in terror*).

You hope! Is there still a doubt then? Let us take our measures this moment! What are they? What could induce the assassins to this? at a moment, too, when I supposed the credulous fools—

MILES.

That is the misfortune of it. While we are attempting to succeed in our design upon others, we are apt to forget they may be as wise as ourselves, and have their plans upon us. Thus it is with the Fitzortons and Stuarts.—It would be distraction to suppose the for-

mer, towards whom it has been the business of years to shew every mark of obloquy you *dare* safely hazard, should ever believe your sudden overtures to good fellowship sincere, or be so blind to the human passions as to accept them if they were,—the love-sick boys alone excepted. This cobweb artifice may pass on children, and lovers who are more weak than children;—it may serve, perhaps, to amuse the hearts of your daughter and Henry Fitzorton;—it may hoodwink your neighbours,—and so much I expected from the measure:—but you and I, who know the world, ought to throw out of our experienced minds such infantile and such frivolous credulities. The practised and politic Sir Guise ought to know that his proffered hand was received with precisely the same degree of sincerity with which it was tendered. To have rejected it would have been as unwise in old Fitzorton, as in Sir Guise not to have presented it. But, this done,—both parties, judging naturally, should put themselves in preparation for war the very instant peace was talked of.

Ask your own heart, my friend, whether its hate has diminished, or its hope of revenge has ceased, since you extended the hand of fictitious amity, and held out the olive-branch?

SIR GUISE.

O Miles! my heart rankles with more deadly poisons; and my pretended treaty of friendship was, as you know, but the more securely to give that blow which your sublimer genius and wisdom told me would be most effectually struck when my hated foes were off their guard. My seeming to smile upon them was but as the gleam of the Dogstar darting upon flowers after the blight has lodged a worm within the bud.

MILES.

True! our only apprehension is,—since those foes are alike diligent,—lest they should have the start of us. The tender Mrs. Tempest has dispatched me, on the wing of affection, to communicate the information I have given you, that your speedy *assassination* is intended; since nothing short of your death can pacify Sir Armine Fitzorton, or his

his inveterate son John, (these are their words) for the insult sustained, the sense of which, notwithstanding a pretended patched up reconciliation, has been brooding in their minds ever since. They have their plots, as wily and as well-concerted as our own.

SIR GUISE (*ready to expire with fear*).

Bloody-minded villains! Haste, my friend, to prevent them. I may, this night, be murdered in my bed! and who knows but Henry and Caroline, or even Charles, may be concerned in the plot? It is always the wisest way to suspect every body. Ungrateful wretches! while I have been thus generously sacrificing to them,—at least, such it must have appeared to them—

MILES.

Sir Guise, I need not, at this time of day, enter into professions of attachment to you. My friendship towards you is as unquestionable, as Mrs. Tempest's love. We would both live or die for you. You have had proof of it: and if you should (which heaven forbid!) fall a victim to the secret and deep-

deep-laid machinations of your enemies,—if you should be destined to breathe your last—

SIR GUISE (*inconceivably agitated*).

Talk not of breathing my last ! but hasten to prevent it. Save my life, and gratify me with complete vengeance on the execrable villains who are now plotting my destruction : and there is nothing within the purchase of my fortune, that shall not be yours in reward of the deed.

MILES.

The intention at the castle, I understand to be this:—Jenny Atwood, who is there protected as an instrument against you, is to be an evidence of your disgrace, which is to be of the most public kind. Your cowardice, your falsehood, (thus they vilify you) your receiving a blow, your abuse of your late lady, your avarice to your son, your cruelty to your daughter, your seduction of Jane, your criminal intercourse with Mrs. Tempest, (this is their *vile* language) your oppression of your neighbours, and your assumed change of character and conduct, which they pretend to see through,—all these

these are forming into one mass, first to effect your disgrace—

SIR GUISE (*gloriously disregarding mere loss of character*).

But my life!—my LIFE, Valentine!

MILES.

First, to effect your disgrace, I say, and then—but indeed their purpose is too horrible;—I know not how to divulge it.

Having wrought the baronet to this, the proper pitch of curiosity, expectation, and terror, Mr. Miles paused,—when, seeing Sir Guise in a disposition to believe every thing, and to dread what he believed, he exclaimed; “But there is some satisfaction in the thought, that, unless we all become victims at the same time, you shall not, my dear friend,—no, you shall not die unrevenge.”

Sir Guise answered, “I tell you, I will not die!—I will sooner leave the abbey—I will sooner fly from the hated face of man—of you, and Tempest, and all the world!”

“Fly from me and Tempest! you cannot! shall not!” cries Miles: “for *her* love, and my friend-

friendship, shall follow you to the uttermost ends of the earth.—Ah! my good friend, were we all united by ties as sacred as they are strong, were we all of one family, and our fates and fortunes run together, what could hurt us? I should defy the powers of hell confederated then to molest you; but while we are thus divided—”

“I see your wishes,” answered the baronet:—“your long-desired happiness shall be granted.—I here pledge myself that *my* hand shall be Tempest’s, and my *daughter’s* yours,—if you will, in this instance, rescue me from the designs of the accursed Fitzortons, and effect my revenge upon them without hazard to my person.

“It is enough,” said Miles. “I know you are a man of honour; and the instant I have informed Mrs. Tempest of her happiness,—you know how it will rejoice her tender soul, which doats on you,—those measures shall be taken,—indeed I had concerted them previously, without other inducement than pure disinterested friendship,—which will complete your triumph, and the defeat of
your

your enemies, at one and the same instant. Meantime, as our double marriage cannot, you know, take place immediately, it might be wrong to let the idea go abroad to any part of your own family, till the impending danger to your precious life is over; and then, my dear father,—for I may now call you by that tender name,—we may shape the intelligence according to events. Indeed, I am ambitious to deserve the honour of an alliance with Sir Guise Stuart, by saving his life *before* I receive the bright reward, the promise of which, should I even die myself in preserving you, I shall think a full atonement; for, though I have not, like that puny lover, the sensitive Henry Fitzorton, been playing at the game of declaration, I have an affection which—an affection which—but your dear life, my future parent, is in danger,—and this is no time to talk sentimentally about my passion:—so, if you will consider of these little articles of family affection which I have drawn up, supposing the family convention between us to take place,—and just put your name thereto, I will
clap

clap the saddle on my horse to convey the glad tidings to Mrs. Tempest,—and return with such plans, and powers of putting them into execution, as shall rid you of all your fears. Meantime, you will intimate nothing of what has past, to your family, but wait my return, in assured expectation that my life shall be the guarantee of yours.—Alas! Sir Guise,” continued Miles, taking the baronet by the hand, “what would have been the event, had not my incessant vigilance and secret intelligence traced the hellish plot now forming against you at the castle! I am sorry to say, Henry is almost the ringleader; your own son is not without a hand in the conspiracy; and in less than eight-and-forty hours, your death,—your concerted murder—”

“Eight-and-forty hours! Mercy defend me!”—cries the baronet.

“Your death, I say, within that time, would have been as certain, as will now be your preservation.”

At the end of this sentence, Sir Guise leaped on the neck of Miles, with the most
extra-

extravagant demonstrations of joy,—called him and Tempest his only friends, protectors, and preservers,—swore they only should be his future heirs, his present associates,—declared he longed for the hour which should give to one the claims of a wife, and to the other those of a son,—and protested he only waited till the forms of mourning for Lady Stuart were past, personally to make a graceful offer. He then opened the paper which Miles had given, glanced his eye hastily over the contents, which he approved,—caught up a pen and signed his name,—called in Dennison and another domestic as witnesses, telling them it was a mere deed of trust,—dismissed them the instant they had made their signatures, and thus bound himself to obligations, the nature of which he scarcely knew, being under terrors which would have induced him to sign away the globe,—and again hugging Miles to his bosom, and calling him his best friend, urged him not to spare horse-flesh, to greet Tempest with the most lavish epithets of fondness, and to return with the utmost speed ; adding

ing

ing, as Miles departed, that he should not dare to take food, or rest, till he again embraced his dear Valentine,—so the dastard now called a man whom he had long feared and despised, and such was the message he sent by that man to a woman who was both his aversion and his dread.

Miles had not left the room more than a minute, when he re-entered, saying, as upon recollection, that, in his zeal to accomplish the baronet's safety, he had forgot all other matters, especially to intimate that as the design of counter-plotting the Fitz-ortons would be attended with considerable expence—

"I understand you," said Sir Guise, taking out some banker's checks, and scribbling at random. "You will pass the house: get these cashed: and should more be wanted, I have always some running cash with my country banker."

"We are wasting time," said Miles, pocketing the drafts. "God bless you! Expect me soon. Be silent and be safe!"

CHAPTER XXXIX.

BUT, great as were the motives already assigned for this invention of plots and intended counterplots to work upon the fears of Sir Guise,—the inventor, and his fair associate, Mrs. Tempest, were influenced by other inducements, more potent than all the advantages they had hopes of deriving, in the issue, from the operation of those fears, and the well-connected fable on which they were founded.

The primary wheels in this grand machine were the lust of revenge, and a lust yet more fordid, more violent, which the widow and her Valentine bore towards the Clares and Fitzortons.

Mr. Clare had been the first to intimate to his friend Fitzorton, that there was something more wicked, though better disguised, in the disposition of Miles than that of the baronet,—adding that he had heard a story of his being drummed out of a regiment
some-

somewhere in Ireland, for mal-practices,—amongst which, “it hangs in my memory,” said Mr. Clare,—“that theft and perjury were not the most atrocious.”

This happening to be communicated to Sir Armine in the presence of one David Otley, a domestic of Mr. Clare's, and a shrewd fellow, but to whom Mr. Clare was somewhat attached, the caution reached, by this medium, the ear of Mr. Miles.—John Fitzorton had been at some pains to trace this rumour, not only in compliance with Mr. Clare's suspicions, but in confirmation of his own, which had secretly fastened upon this man, even when he had the privileges of a visitor at the castle, in common with Sir Guise, who introduced him.—John soon profited of those opportunities which his military connexions gave him, and made a report at the castle, not covertly, but consistent with the intrepid decision of his character.

One day, when the same David Otley was waiting at the back of his master's chair, and when, indeed, Sir Guise himself,—it

being prior to the public breach,—was at Sir Armine's table,—“ It is matter of astonishment to me,” said John, who happened to be the only person of his family then present, “ that a fellow who has every vice in human nature, but cowardice,—and that single exception proceeding only from a fearless constitutional impudence,—should gain the protection of any person of credit.”

Then turning to Sir Guise, he added, “ If, on your return to the abbey, you should meet with a friend of yours who answers to this character, do me the honour, sir, to tell him what I have said. And farther, should his being in possession of the single quality I have alluded to, namely, his insolent courage, be thought a counterbalance for the stain of every baseness, by the use and exercise *you* may have for it, Sir Guise, I have only to desire, in the name of my family, that the gentleman who may be so gifted, from this moment for evermore, may forbear coming to the castle,—and I think I may venture to add, or the manor-house.”

It

It is unnecessary to observe, that this pointed message was carried, at the time, to the party concerned.—Indeed, lest any thing should be lost in its journey from the castle to the abbey, it was kindly taken to the latter mansion by two persons.—Sir Guise faithfully related it, the very same night, to Mr. Valentine Miles; and David Otley took it in his budget of castle and manor-house intelligence, the next morning.

A natural consequence, arising from this inhibition, was, of course, cutting the acquaintance of Mr. Miles: but another very natural consequence, of course *also*, took place between the truly brave John Fitz-orton and the truly audacious Valentine Miles.

No sooner was the latter in possession of the favourable sentiments borne him by the former, than he sent, in turn, a scarce less civil message to John, who instantly observed the contents, without so much as uttering a syllable to any of the family, save and except to True George, then *his* domestic.—Miles had contrived to get the baronet to

accompany him to the place of rendezvous, without letting him know the design.—Accordingly, the parties met at the dawn of the third day from the communication of John's opinion.—At the sight of John, whose very countenance was a rebuke to cowardice, Sir Guise involuntarily drew back a few paces; and the view of the pistols, a brace of which both antagonists took out of their pockets at the same time, made him so expert at the science of tergiversation, that he had got several yards in his way home, exclaiming, “Miles had betrayed him,”—before the said Miles perceived he had taken fright.—Valentine, however, who wanted him as a witness of that prowess which might be one day of service in his own cause, soon brought him back, asserting, that “*He* was in no danger:”—and the duellists prepared for action.

John condescended only to say, sternly, “Fellow, I am admitting you to an undeserved honour.”—Then settling their distance, and taking aim, almost in the same
instant

instant John discharged his shot and received that of Miles, without any injury to either.—John's ball, however, whizzed so near to the body of Sir Guise, who had shifted about, that the good baronet again took to his heels, and George after him, leaving the field of battle solely to the combatants.—John's next ball took effect in the neck of his adversary, who dropping on the ground, John demanded "if he was satisfied with his being still of opinion he was a scoundrel:"—and upon being answered by Valentine that "he was satisfied for the present,"—John left him to the care of True George, who by this time returned without the fearful game of which he had been in chase.—John now walked home, saying to True George, "When you have conveyed that fellow to the abbey, return to me at the castle; and do not inform any of my family, I have disgraced either them or myself, by such a contest, I charge you.—And as for you, sir," added he, addressing Miles, as George lifted him from the ground,—“if you live, and are again as impudent as you are infamous,

I may be tempted to confer on you the dignity of a second leaden token of my esteem for your virtues: and if you die, public honours ought to be adjudged me, for being the author of that inestimable blessing to the community, your invaluable death!"

Although neither John, who was too much ashamed of his exploit, nor True George, who was too faithful to his trust, revealed this transaction to any other person at home or abroad,—and, perhaps, both had long since thrown it from their memories, as unworthy of preservation,—the whole business was still smarting in the recollection of Miles, who,—although he did not think proper to call John to a second account, nor to assign it amongst his motives for taking part in the vengeance of Sir Guise,—had been inwardly consuming with the most implacable hatred to the whole family ever since.

He had, indeed, long watched his occasion,—had assiduously, though secretly, fomented every cause and effect of hatred in the baronet,—and was almost in despair of
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an opportunity falling out suitable to his design, when at length he came to the knowledge of circumstances which will presently be no secret to the reader, and which, if well managed, he did not doubt, would produce a rich harvest of events favourable to his love, his avarice, and his vengeance.—The fabrication of the well-timed story of the assassination of Sir Guise was simply a necessary prelude to the bringing this about; and, as to the degree of probability of the tale, he was the less careful to construct it, as he had often perceived that when the baronet's terrors were once excited by a sudden shock, none of his faculties were sufficiently at his command to reflect how the history hung together, or how the parts were in harmony with the whole.—On the contrary, every sense seemed to take the alarm, at the moment he heard of a possible danger; and, like an affrighted family running from a house at the cry of fire, every passion of his soul, but that of fear, left his bosom.

Now, in accounting for the hatred

which the widow Tempest bore to the house of Fitzorton, we fear we must be under the disagreeable necessity of telling yet another Family Secret, and one which a more prudent biographer would conceal. But the truth, that guides our pen, demands the discovery; and the human nature, to which our history is dedicated, must plead excuse for whatever offences the development of mysteries behind her curtain may bring to light.

CHAPTER XL.

HENRY became acquainted with Mrs. Tempest, without knowing any thing of her attachment to Valentine Miles, or her connexion with Sir Guise Stuart.—The time was critical.

It was during Henry's visit in London to a female relation: and his first interview happened at a very remarkable moment.—It was, in truth, in the evening of the day on which, with his accustomed punctuality and
ardour,

ardour, he had dispatched a large packet of “everlasting love and constancy” to his dear Caroline, under cover to the trusty Dennison.

The soft duty of his heart discharged, he went to the theatre, full of the tenderest vows, the fondest ideas; but having made, in company with some young friends, larger libations to the purple god of the grape, or rather, to the health of his beloved, than his reason could bear, though his passion seemed to augment at every glass,—he happened to walk, we had almost written, *flagger*, into a box, where the widow was then smiling at Mr. Congreve’s pleasant comedy of *Love for Love*. Seeing a place to the left vacant, and near a beautiful lady, the right side being occupied by another female, who appeared to be in the character of a foil, rather than of a rival brilliant,—he made one of those bows which were sure to procure him a gracious reception; and, perceiving his welcome insured, by the brilliant’s sitting closer to the foil, in

order to make more room for him,—he took possession of the seat.

Rather as an effect of high youth and high spirits animated by love and wine, than a spirit of gallantry, he entered at once into some glowing remarks on the scene which was then representing.—The lady being one of those females who follow first impressions, and have the talent of being desperately in love at a glance, contrived to forget, in the space of half an hour, that Sir Guise Stuart (for it was his widow Tempest) had any claims for money, or her Valentine Miles for love,—or, indeed, that Mr. Congreve had any wit, or that her mute companion required any more of her attention than if she had been part of the bench she sat on,—or, in short, that there was any body but the enchanting young stranger at her side in the creation.—She presently gave the youth such manifest and manifold proofs of her so thinking, by certain little tendernesses, innuendoes, languishing looks, and gentle pressures, every one of
of

of which,—though they were perfectly new to him,—being altogether in a different style from the attentions of the chaste and charming Caroline,—it was impossible for him not to comprehend their meaning: and before the couples in the *comedy* were brought together in the last act, an union of a different kind was settled in the lady's mind, and ratified in her eyes, which seemed to *insist* on the consent of the young gentleman.—In a word, the widow thought her new object—and, indeed, she decided rightly—one of the handsomest and most elegant young men she had ever seen,—and, agreeably to *her* first-sight system, was, by the time the first act of the farce was over, *in love with him to distraction!*

It is probable she heard not a sentence of act the second, though it was upon a subject congenial to her feelings: so entirely was she engrossed by her new conqueror. At the conclusion, common gallantry required he should see her safe out of the house, and put her and her still dumb companion into their carriage,—to which as he was hand-

ing them, the widow said, even as she set her foot on the step, "I hope, sir, I shall have the honour to set you down, in return for your civility." — Which offer being accompanied by certain invisible signs and tokens, as potent as the secrets of freemasonry, or the ancient art of palmistry,— Henry got into the coach, and seated himself on the same side, without attending to the other lady quite so much as the forms of politeness might seem to prescribe.

Henry, new to the town, thought it right, in point of etiquette, to see the lady home, before he took the liberty of using her carriage, which was, therefore, driven to a very handsome house in Grosvenor Square; where, alighting to hand the ladies out, it is certainly *possible* that Henry might have taken leave of his ladies, had not the sprightly widow sportingly exclaimed, with certain accompaniments, having still hold of his arm, "We may as well make it the romance of a night, sir, if you are not better engaged:—for you must know, I dreamed of an adventure of this sort, and
am

am just in the humour to have my dream out.—What say you, Priscilla?”—turning to her companion.—“I should like it of all things:” replied the lady.—Henry was not in a disposition to be rude: so the widow informed the coachman she should have no farther occasion for the carriage; and the *trio* of choice spirits tripped into the house.

Voluptuous elegance now began its fascination.—A collation was soon served up, after which the servants disappeared; the most costly wines circulated; for neither the widow nor her companion was unknown to the jolly god; and either of them would have taken off her bottle, with more ease than Olivia Clare, or Caroline Stuart, or any such “puny whipster” of the sex, could have managed her first and half sipped her second glass.

Indeed, our fair seducers were frequent votaries at the court of Comus, insomuch that Mrs. Tempest might have represented, and, in truth, often *did* represent, upon the stage of life, the part of Euphrosyne; and

her associate had as often done equal justice to the character of the principal bacchante.

It is with reluctance we tell the reader that Henry was not so much alarmed at finding himself in such company, as was Milton's lady when she discovered the danger of *her* situation;—yet the situation was but too similar with respect to the surrounding magic.

Mrs. Tempest was, in all senses of the character, a syren.—Her voice, though neither sweet nor tender, either like that of Olivia or Caroline, was yet seductively harmonious.—Her eyes, though possessing neither the modest lustre of Olivia's, nor the appealing softness of Caroline's, darted such intolerable fire through her long dark eye-lashes, that a less ardent gazer than Henry might have been scorched by their burning beams.—She was somewhat under the size of Olivia, and, by the same proportion, above that of Caroline:—she wanted the chaste dignity that gave command to the one, and was utterly destitute of the interesting

esting graces, shifting with every attitude, that adorned the other.—But she had to boast a symmetry of shape, a certain voluptuous roundness of limbs, a *contour* of visage, and an alluring government of countenance, so entirely the reverse of both, that while *their* features were formed to *instruct* the beholder that real beauty, love, and virtue, were the same,—those of the widow were calculated to excite, suddenly, a train of impetuous emotions, formed to seduce from the youthful bosom all its heavenly guards, and lure the gazer to indulge in the fatal contrast.—All the lineaments of her face offered the most infallible marks of passion unrestrained, an inordinate love of pleasure, and a total disdain of the decent laws by which passion and pleasure, and more especially in women, ought to be regulated.—Her lips were in exact correspondence with her eyes, and as constantly employed in expressing the same emotions; and the regularity and colour of her teeth could only yield to the beauty of her arms and bosom, which were in the highest perfection

fection of female loveliness, but were displayed or shaded with a studied attention, that denoted she was at once proud and conscious of their attraction.

The then extreme youth of Henry, the novelty of the situation, the combining enchantments, and the state of the poor lad's head, will, we hope, mitigate his offence, should we own, as own we must, that he was far from being a mere neutral listener or looker on during the hilarities of the evening. — He looked at the widow, indeed, with a timid admiration: and as she sung several couplets from the *L'Allegro*, Henry's manly and pathetic voice, which the reader has already heard celebrated, joined in the chorus, with a spirit that shewed he had been gradually enchanted *out of himself*.

“Here's a health to those that we love!” cries the widow, filling the glass while she sung.

“Here's a health to those that love *us*!” answered her companion, in the same style, putting the bottle, which contained some excellent champaigne, to Henry, who then,
for

for the first time, probably, since the intoxication began, blushed and sighed, as at the remembrance of Caroline.

This, however, though noticed by the piercing eyes of the widow, was construed rather into growing passion for herself, than tenderness for another. — With renewed fervency, therefore, she proceeded with the song, increasing in animation as she went on;—and when they came to the following line, which the widow trilled with uncommon melody,

“O my love, lov’st thou me?”

she cast an enflaming and decided look at Henry; and her redundant hair dropt from its slight bondage, and covered her with its luxurious mantle.

The heart of Henry must have been made of “impenetrable stuff,” indeed, had he, at such a time, in such a place, and at such an opportunity, affected not to understand the drift of such a question, breathed in harmony, through the lips of beauty.

The companion, on some pretence or
other,

other, withdrew; and the very few remains of modesty, which had been reluctantly confined in the room before, followed her, or rather flew blushing out of the apartment, the moment the door opened, and seemed to wish for an asylum in Caroline's or Olivia's bosom.

Mrs. Tempest and Henry were now together; and very few moments more might have completed the triumph of youthful folly and infidelity, had not Henry's good angel, in the *imaged* form of Caroline herself, interposed:—and that pure image was brought forward even by Mrs. Tempest herself.

“Come, one more brimmer to the woman of your heart,” said Mrs. Tempest, replenishing her own, and then Henry's glass.

“This one bumper more, thou enchanting stranger! who—without my knowledge of, or desire to know, thy name, family, fortune, or aught but thy enchanting *self*,—hast turned a moment of time into an age of love!”

She quoted, theatrically, various rhapsodies

dies from the old dramatic poets: and then seizing Henry's hand, every artery of which trembled, she pressed it to her lips, exclaiming, "Ah! dear unknown, tell me who she is?—What is her name?—Whose health am I to drink?—Who is my too happy rival?—For to suppose—to flatter myself, I have the bliss to find the heart of such a love-inspiring fellow unengaged—and still at liberty to devote itself to this throbbing breast——"

She thought proper to hesitate, and imitate bashful difficulty,—then went on—

"To dare even hope that I meet such a treasure undisposed of, is a bliss too great! too mighty!—No, 'twas too presumptuous! and yet to think this hand, those lips, that form, this panting heart another's—O! it would destroy me!—By my soul it would!"

—After a trembling pause, she cried, "You are silent—you blush—your lips turn pale—and, good heavens!—ah! what do I see? there are tears in your eyes!—Accursed fortune!—perhaps, perhaps you love!—
confu-

confusion! perhaps—no, you are not—surely you are not *married!*—but if you are ——”

“Curse! as the sweet poet says,—curse on *all* laws but those which love has made!”

“Love, free as air, at sight of human *ties*
Spreads its light wing and in a moment flies!”

CHAPTER XLI.

HAVING finished her poetical justifications, which have been many a pretty libertine’s, and tripping lady’s apology, she observed Henry extremely troubled.

“What can be the matter with you?—Yes, I know my fate.—It is not the fetters of wedlock *only* I have to contend with:—these might be broken—these, I could snap asunder;—but, you are bound in the chains of *love*—almighty love!—and I—wretched woman!—But I am resolved to know all.—

Here,

Here, since you cannot speak the cruel word, write—write the dreaded name—write on the back of this letter, and with my pencil—there—who am I to hate—curse—exterminate?—mark the detested name.”

“*Detested* name!” reiterated Henry: “oh! she is an angel! and her precious name would be profaned, were I to breathe it now with these unfaithful lips, to those polluted ones which have tempted me to injure her.”

“*Polluted* lips!” in her turn re-echoed the widow, springing up, and disdainfully withdrawing her hand from Henry’s,—“*Polluted lips*!—have a care, sir!—you do not perhaps know, that, as I can doat to distraction, so can I abhor to madness!—yes, and both with equal speed!—*Polluted lips*!—they have seldom been rewarded for their partiality by such an epithet!”

She took the room three or four times, backwards and forwards, in a violent passion, sometimes throwing herself down into a chair, sometimes tossing by Henry, without deign-

deigning to mark her rage, except through the flashes of her indignant eyes, — from which shot now as intense flames of fury, as had, a few moments before, darted burning beams of desire.—Her whole person was rendered terrifying, and might perhaps have alarmed Henry, though by no means apt to be appalled, had not another object, more fraught with terrors than an hundred thousand angry men or even women, with an equal number of armed troops in their train, fastened upon his attention, namely, the sight of the *address* of that letter which the widow had produced for the purpose of his penciling her rival's name, and which the said widow had hurled in disdain upon the sofa, where Henry and she had before been seated.

This superscription opened on Henry's eyes the following discoveries—first, that he had entangled himself, almost past redemption, in an affair of gallantry with the mistress of his beloved Caroline's father! and secondly, that it was directed to the said father's

father's mistress, in the well-known handwriting of Sir Guise Stuart!

"Merciful Heaven!" exclaimed Henry,—"what do I see?—is it possible, madam, you should be Mrs. Tempest?"

"And what *then*, sir?" demanded the widow, snatching the letter from Henry, and throwing it into the fire with a dreadful execration.

"*That* Mrs. Tempest, continued Henry, of whom I have heard so much?—whom Sir Guise Stu——?"

"And who then are *you*?" questioned the widow, stopping him in the middle of the name.—"Are you that enemy of mine, his detested son, whose hate I have long felt, but whose person I have never yet——"

"No, Madam!" replied Henry, interrupting in his turn,—“I am not so great, so just, so honourable a man, as that noble, that distinguished youth, whom I now blush to call my friend!—but, unworthy as I am, I bless heaven for this timely discovery,—this miraculous escape!"

Henry caught up his hat, and, without

con-

considering the lateness of the hour, or any thing else but what he had mentioned, hurried to the door.

“Escape!—escape!—insolent!—impudent!”—raved forth Mrs. Tempest, running after him, and pulling him back.—“Confusion to my soul!—if you provoke me,—whosoever you are, were you the father who gave me life—”

Henry struggled in her grasp:—and a violent rapping at the street door made him step a few paces back.

The lady exclaimed, still keeping her hold, and perfectly agonized with rage, shaking Henry while she spoke,—“God be thanked!—that is either Valentine or Sir Guise!—now, sir, will *my triumph* be complete!”

As she said this, a noise was heard upon the stairs; and presently the former of the above-mentioned persons made his appearance.

He had come to town, as the reader may remember, post haste, on the business of Jane Atwood. Arriving with Sir Guise in the
middle

middle of the night, and having left the baronet in Jane's lodgings, which had been provided by Miles,—he, Miles, had made up his excuse for visiting the widow at so unreasonable an hour, as at that time he observed some etiquette with her.

At the sight of Henry, whom he had seen more than once at the abbey, and whose passion for Caroline he had heard from Sir Guise, he started, as at that of an apparition.

“Mr. Henry Fitzorton!” exclaimed he.

“Who?—Henry Fitzorton!” cried the widow.—“No wonder, then, these unheard-of outrages have been heaped on me!—and I have not the smallest doubt, but that one wickedness would have led to another, till it had ended in my death!—oh, Valentine!—sure heaven sent you at this moment to my rescue!—could you conceive what I have endured from this, till now, unknown wretch,—your heart would bleed for me!”

She then related the foregoing scene, so as exactly to reverse the several actual circumstances,

stances, observing, with an admirable accuracy of transposition, that, "he had rudely seated himself in the same box at the play-house,—watched her out,—thrust himself into her coach,—ran up stairs as soon as they got home,—forced poor Priscilla, her companion, out of the room,—locked the door,—swore that he would destroy the first person who offered to approach,—and, on casting his eye upon a letter she had received from her dear, dear Sir Guise, whose hand-writing he knew, he slandered both him and Valentine, with a volley of execrations,—and was proceeding to every thing shocking, when her good stars brought her friend Valentine to her aid!—'I was surely providence,' &c. &c. &c.

As soon as she had finished this speech, which the gentleman whom she addressed believed as much of as she did herself,—yet the former thought it might be most productive to give it credit,—Valentine went into another room, observing, "he should return in a moment."

The widow then sallied up to Henry, and,

in a malicious whisper, accompanied by a sarcastic sneer, her arms akimbo, demanded, "whether he thought another miracle would happen, to befriend his *escape* from the vengeance of her injured friend!"

Henry disdained to make her any reply; and indeed, before he could have done so, Miles returned with his pistols, at the sight of which, Mrs. Tempest, affecting to be alarmed, flung herself on her knees, and interceded for the life of Henry;—then, by a gentle whisper, suggested to Miles, "that if the outrage were well managed, it would be worth more to them both, than a million of such lives."—This intercession wrought so on the tender heart of Miles, that all would have gone off, for the moment, with a gentle reprimand or menace, had not Henry,—who felt the Fitzorton blood rush in boiling torrents through his veins, walked towards Valentine, and snapping his fingers in his face, observed loftily, "that the trick was too stale, and that, as he was too infamous a wretch to be met on a level by a man of honour, whose family had justly

banished him from their presence, he should be warranted to treat him in the only way such a scoundrel was entitled to, if he did not let him pass out of the *private brothel* which Sir Guise and himself kept between them.—“I have concealed your vile secret, which has been long communicated to me by the injured Charles, only out of delicacy to my angel.—I will no more sully her pure name by breathing it in a pest house.—But, if an accent, respecting the shameful company into which I have been trepanned by that vicious and artful woman, is mentioned either in my hearing, or in that of any person dear to me, and it should reach me, I will set fire to a train that shall destroy you both!—so be warned.”

It was with great difficulty Miles now held the arms of Mrs. Tempest, who maddened with rage, shame, and disappointment.—Miles was himself scarce less inflamed: but certain ideas rose in his mind suddenly, that induced him to let Henry go unmolested out of the room, and also to hold the widow by main force till the street door

was

was shut, even to the hazard of Valentine's own face, which received several lusty blows ;—but, when Henry was fairly off, it did not take either much pains or time to convince the lady, that, “ though her whole story was *well put together*, he knew it had not one syllable of truth in it, and that, even had it been as veritable as it was false, it would be better for all parties to hush up the affair at present.—Till we provoke the stripling farther, he will keep *our* secret for the sake of *his own* ; and the bringing upon us the fury of Charles, and of the d * * * d Fitzortons,—and, in consequence of our ill-timed resentment, arousing that nest of hornets, the magistrates,—would ruin the fruit of those plans which a little discretion will mature. — And as to Sir Guise himself,” added Miles, archly,—“ it would be as impossible to persuade him as me, or indeed yourself, that a young fellow should come here, and drink champaigne, or burgundy,—which, I perceive by these tell-tale bottles, has been the case,—without your consent, unless he committed a rape upon

the key of your cellar also!—No!—no!—let us be merry and wise, my dear widow: leave the event of this business with me.—I have a memory and mind, very faithful to my resentments; and depend upon it, when opportunity favours, though it should be the length of the siege of Troy before it arrives, I shall cherish the freshest recollection of whatever has been done or said in this business, even down to the saucy snap of his fingers in my face, which *his heart's dearest blood* shall one day pay for!—no matter!—leave the *thoughts* of revenge to me.—When time is ripe, do you assist the deed; and depend on it, we shall both be satisfied.”

This consideration pacified her; and as Miles knew Sir Guise was safely disposed of in the apartments of the deluded Jane Atwood for the night, he entered into the explanations he thought fit to make the widow for his untimely visit; and the amiable pair retired, after the bustles of the night, to the consolation of each other's faithful arms.

But,

But, though this happy couple, reconciled by mutual deception, were satisfied with each other, they were by no means so with Henry :—for, notwithstanding the happy turn which the widow gave to the affair at the time, and her incessant assurances since, so often as it was mentioned, it was beyond the reach of policy, casuistry, or the most solemn oaths, to make Valentine believe there had not been some previous intercourse between Henry and herself, and that he caught them only in some quarrel of love, which would have ended in the usual way, had not his coming at the moment made it expedient for her to *pretend* violence, outrage, and displeasure.—And the idea did not a little aggravate the hate he bore to the Fitzortons, who appeared, at every turn, the bane of his purposes. —Indeed, John and Henry were now alike detestable to him, especially as at this time the person of Mrs. Tempest, —though, for reasons good, he consented to divide her with Sir Guise,—was not then indifferent to him : for he had only begun

to plot alienating the affections of the recently seduced Jane from the baronet.

And as to Mrs. Tempest herself, the sudden gust of love—or by whatever other name the reader thinks it ought to be called, for Henry, was presently succeeded by as sudden an aversion, when she found that no less than three penitently-*tender* letters, and one madly *accusing* epistle, which she caused to be clandestinely delivered to him by the means of David Otley, produced *not one word of reply*.

The caution, and dread of consequences, however, suggested by Miles, restrained her from public and avowed revenge; but the thirst of vengeance kept raging within, and threatened one day to burst upon his head. Meantime, she availed herself of more than one occasion to do him secret mischief, by way of giving earnest of her future designs.—The anonymous letters to John and his father, respecting Caroline, were from this lady's pen:—and had she known, at the time, his situation with Olivia, that would probably have been the subject of a third epistle.

epistle.—Why she did not, since that, do him this kindness also, is yet in our confidence, and also, the farther proof, in her instance, how great truth there is in that celebrated distich of the poet—

“Heav’n has no plague like love to hatred turn’d,
“Nor Hell a fury like a woman scorn’d.”

In regard to Henry, candid reader, his error, and his repentance, are both before you.—His trespass, and his temptations, have been delineated.

We are writing certain parts of the history of Human Nature, the inconsistencies of which, we must again repeat, it is our office rather to describe than account for.—The foregoing scene has nothing irreconcilable with the frail though interesting subject of our book, the human heart; and it is to be wished that every young man who *began* an adventure of this kind as imprudently, might *finish* it as amiably as Henry Fitzorton.

To suppose that this his approach to infidelity will recommend him to the vir-

tuous reader, would be insulting: but to imagine he has lost that virtuous reader's good will for his first and last indiscretion of this kind, would be to suspect that the reader has either great ignorance of human nature, or great hypocrisy;—there seems to us no other alternative.—Leaving, therefore, the point to be settled by the only power which can settle it, the reader's *conscience*, we shall return to the place from whence we have digressed.

CHAPTER XLII.

ABOUT the time that the disastrous Henry left the abbey, the impatient Olivia bent her steps toward that venerable mansion;—and never, perhaps, was an evening walk undertaken by two persons in situations of mind, and with reflections, more opposite. Henry, impelled by despair, and driven by irremediable necessity from the presence of his dear but deeply distressed Caroline, literally felt that “he dragged at each remove,
the

the lengthening chain:" every step hurried him farther from the object of his affections, while Olivia, animated by hope, was by every step brought nearer to him whom she loved with unspeakable tenderness, and whom she fondly believed she was about to make the happiest of mankind.

They met about the mid way of the memorable grand avenue; and the sudden sight of each other inspired very distinct emotions.—Henry wished for the velocity of thought to escape so unseasonable a rencontre, and Olivia sighed for the speed of light to reach his hand.—Yet both were alike embarrassed, the one by trembling joy, the other by variety of sorrow.—By an involuntary impulse, Henry receded a few paces with the degree of rapidity that Olivia advanced; the wings of fear are even more rapid than those of love.—But Henry soon recovered himself and his steps; and by one of those hazards, which have all the air of design, and yet are common enough in life, Olivia and Henry joined each other immediately parallel to the place where the first

avowal of love had been made by Henry to Caroline ;—a circumstance, we trust, in the full recollection of the reader.

Anxious to know Caroline's reply to the request stated in the letter which had already produced so much mischief in the abbey family, Olivia was covered with blushes, and, hesitating almost to a stammer, alluded to the subject most likely to increase Henry's confusion.—“What would I give,” said she, “to have been a sylph, or some other spirit, to have been present, yet unseen, at the reading of my hurried but heart-felt letter to Caroline !”

“Present at it !—you present !—good heaven !” exclaimed Henry, throwing up his hands and eyes.

“I dare say,” continued Olivia, “you all thought me—but yet—I hope—”

Her blushes deepened, and the faltering of her voice augmented.

“I hope Caroline did not shew it ?—Gracious !—if she did, I should never forgive her ! yet,” recovering herself, “wherefore should I talk thus ? wherefore attempt to conceal

conceal the pride and triumph of my life? O Henry, my dear—dear—Henry, grant me a portion of your eloquence, that I may express what I feel at the thought of calling Henry—I know not what I would say,—I only know that I am the most honoured and blessed of human beings,—and that it is his goodness, love, and constancy, have made me so.”

Her eyes were directed to those of Henry, as her artless heart thus poured itself forth to her now almost husband; for, in his late absence the two fathers had at last fixed the eventful day of those nuptials which had a thousand times come into the sport and seriousness of the family conversation; but Lady Fitzorton had communicated it in form to Olivia a few minutes before she set out to meet Henry.

The eyes of Henry were now cast a different way,—and they were filled with tears.

“Ah! hope and glory of my life!” exclaimed Olivia,—“wherefore do you weep? If, those tears, like mine, proceed not from

excess of tenderness,—excess of felicity,—the earth bears not such a wretch as Olivia !”

“ They do — the almighty searcher of hearts knows—they do proceed,” said Henry, passionately, “ from tenderness !”

“ That omnipotent witness be praised !” ejaculated Olivia. “ And yet, methinks I would not have such drops as these flow from my Henry’s heart, even though they spring from joy !”

Archangels might have sanctioned the movement with which Olivia now laid her cheek to that of Henry, and dried up his tears. Alas ! the fountain was full, and streamed afresh.

“ Yonder is an arboring tree with a bench round it.—I see it through the under-wood,” said Olivia, gently drawing Henry towards the place.

“ Let us rest awhile,” continued she : “ for I have something—very—very dear to impart to my Henry.”

Henry suffered himself to be led passively on ; when reaching the bench, he sat down, Olivia placing herself by his side.

"I protest," said Olivia, resuming her cheerfulness, that Henry might catch the gaiety, "this spot seems formed for tender hearts ;—doth it not, Henry?—One would imagine these bowering hawthorns and these o'er-arching shades, branching from this romantic oak, had been the scene of some gentle assignation in days of chivalry."

Every word she spoke, though designed to convey more than the rose's fragrance to his sense, was sharper than a thorn pressing into his heart. His disappointments were all brought close under his very eye : and wherever he turned, memory presented some bleeding image of former felicity, untimely destroyed even in the spot which was at once the place of its birth and burial.

He turned his head, as to conceal his agitations, when those initials of Caroline's name which his own hand had carved in the rind of the oak, met his view, and the words, "O my only life and love!" burst spontaneously from his heart. The name of Caroline which was about to follow this passionate exclamation, quivered and died

ON

on his lips; yet wholly subdued by a situation so affecting, he sunk down on Olivia's shoulder; and he had only strength enough to sigh out, "This—this—is too much!"

Olivia naturally applied to herself the above-mentioned tender expression so characteristic of Henry's habits, and so congenial to the rhapsody of her own heart: and she supposed—as how, indeed, could she imagine otherwise?—he was melted by that overwhelming sensibility which might well be excited in a disposition like his, by the avowal she had made of boundless returns of her affection. "And, ah! in what language but your own," cried she, chastely but fondly caressing him, her own lovely eyes repaying him with largest interest every tear,—“oh in what language but Henry's can I answer such tenderness?—My only life! my only love! Yes,” added she, exalting her voice without diminishing its sweetness, “that divinity to whom my beloved had just appealed in testimony of his own faith, can tell how truly my love and life are devoted to him alone.”

Henry

Henry raised himself up, as if to rectify the misconstruction which had been put on an expression that Olivia had so naturally appropriated: but the sudden appearance of little Fitz, and, in the ensuing moment, the sound of a voice, exclaiming, "there is the dog,—depend upon it his friends are not far off,"—pointed his attention to other objects.

CHAPTER XLIII.

HENRY and Olivia, without expressing their surprise to each other, hastened through the opening in the bushes to explore the cause, when they observed Sir Armine and Lady Fitzorton coming up the avenue, and within a few paces of them.

Olivia, who had caught up little Fitz, in silent rapture ran down the avenue to meet them, and in a whisper assured Lady Fitzorton that Henry was the best creature in the world, and had made her the happiest.—
"With all his ardours you know, my dear madam," said she, "he is not a man of professions,

essions,—more delicately trusting to actions than words, in attestation of his feelings ;—a conduct I have often vainly attempted to imitate, and which I have admired, even when I could have quarrelled with him for it. But, had you heard the endearing expressions he just uttered, accompanied by his tears, and witnessed by his love-declaring eyes—O heaven!—indeed,—indeed,—I am the happiest—and he is the best of human beings !”

During the display of this delusion, which those who admire Olivia will wish might end with her life, Henry was advancing, but with steps that little justified Olivia’s description, on an occasion which would have carried him,—had he been indeed her lover,—with a speed and impatience like her own.

Indeed he seemed at first undetermined whether to make his escape by rushing into the woods, or to join the family party. Perceiving, however, the latter were moving towards him, he thought it would be impossible to recede ; and after assuring his
stars

stars that he now defied their utmost malice, and should resign himself to their malignant power without any farther resistance, he somewhat quickened his pace, like a man giving himself up despairingly to the worst that could happen. Notwithstanding this, he saluted his parents with those graces of filial duty which the sight of them always enkindled, and which even disappointed love, of whose pangs they were in great measure the cause, could not extinguish.

The sight, however, of little Fitz, whom he had not before seemed to notice, had nearly overset his plan of non-resistance. "Would it not be best for me, dearest madam, to step home with that spaniel?" said he to his mother. "I dare say he watched the opening of the abbey gate to follow me."

Henry held out his arm to receive him from Olivia, who sportingly said, "she was sure he came again on a message to her from his fair mistress; for there was more than ordinary accident in the dog's returning so soon and at such a moment, they might depend

pend on it; and she would therefore give him a fair chance either to go or stay."

She gently patted him, and set him down, observing that she would use no bribery to detain, nor any chiding to dismiss him. "Let him follow his own unbiassed inclinations," said Olivia: "if he goes towards the abbey, I declare I will not say a word to call him back; but if he attends any of us uncalled, I shall,—yes, you may laugh at my superstition as much as you please,—but I shall think there is more in it than common chance,—and expect a welcome for him at the castle, till I can have an opportunity to return him to his lovely owner, in person.—There—now for it!—He is now to do as he likes. Say nothing; but let us walk on, and leave him to himself."

Little Fitz was no sooner set upon the ground, than he paid his compliments, first to Henry, then to the rest of the company, and bounding along the avenue in the direct line towards the castle, seemed to confirm the prepossession of Olivia, who now
roundly

roundly re-asserted, nothing should persuade her there was not more in it than even the philosophy of John, had he been present, could find out.

Sir Armine, who had attended rather to the history of his son's face than to what had been said about the dog, caught the eye of Henry, and over-ruled whatever farther arguments or objections he might have been disposed to make : so the whole groupe went together to the castle. At first they walked arm in arm, in a row ; but soon after they divided two and two, — Olivia and Lady Fitzorton, Sir Armine and Henry. This arrangement was again altered, by design or accident : for Sir Armine proposed that his wife and Olivia should make the best of their way home, and that he and Henry would take a poetical faunter, and follow at leisure ; averring that he wished to discuss with him a *knotty* point.

The emphasis with which he pronounced these words, and the smile that accompanied them,

them, was so well understood by her ladyship, that she pleasantly exclaimed; walking away with Olivia at the same time, "Pray, my dear daughter, let us leave these poetic philosophers to settle their *knotty* points by themselves, while you and I," whispered she to Olivia, who crimsoned at the remark, "go and prepare some other knots that shall prove too hard for both their worships." Olivia turned back thrice on pretence of seeing whether little Fitz preferred the male or the female division of the party, but, possibly, for a more affectionate reason. The sagacious and political little animal, however, seemed to keep, like James Fitz-orton, the midway between them, and so continued to hold well with both parties:—a line of conduct which has been faithfully followed by much greater politicians.

We would forbear to insert these minutæ, were we not assured that the real great events in life are, as some one has profoundly observed, produced by a nice train of little circumstances.

For

For example, this apparently trifling matter of filing off the family groupe into divisions led to an incident of as great importance to Henry, and perhaps to our readers, as any hitherto recorded in this history.

END OF VOL. II.